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BY

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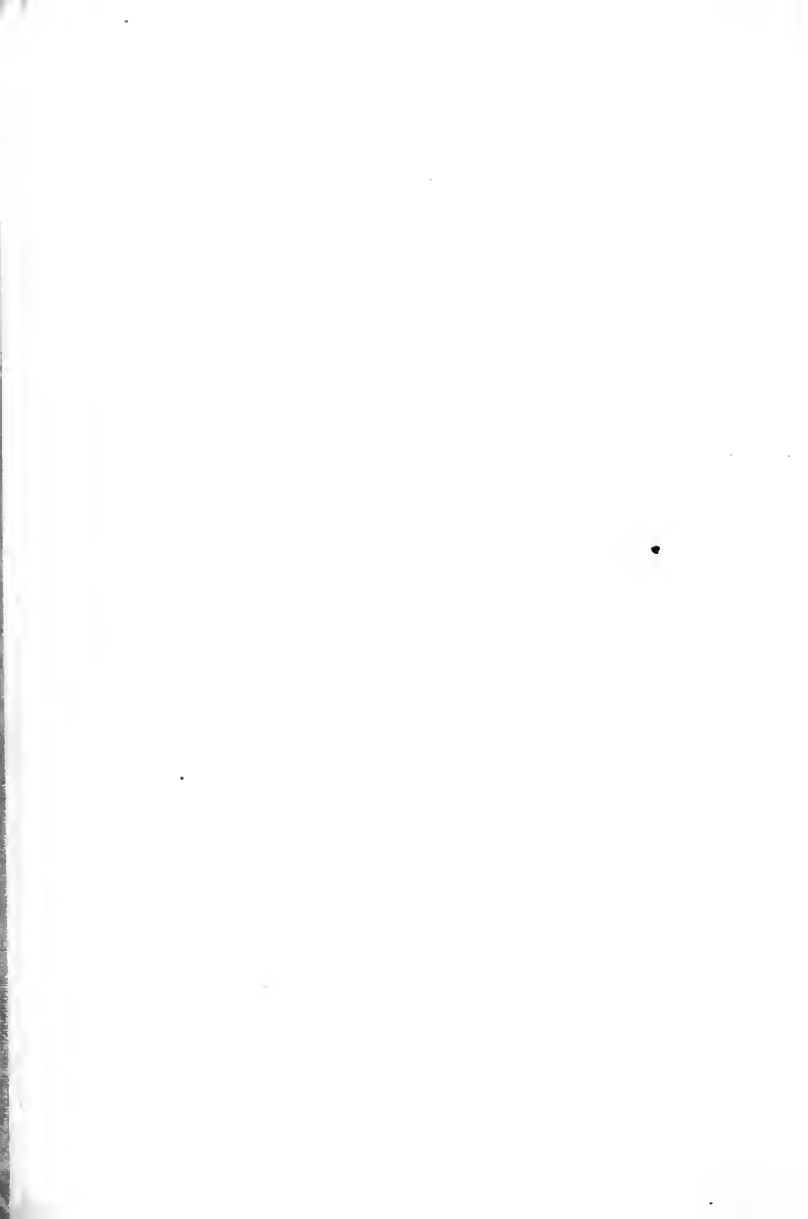
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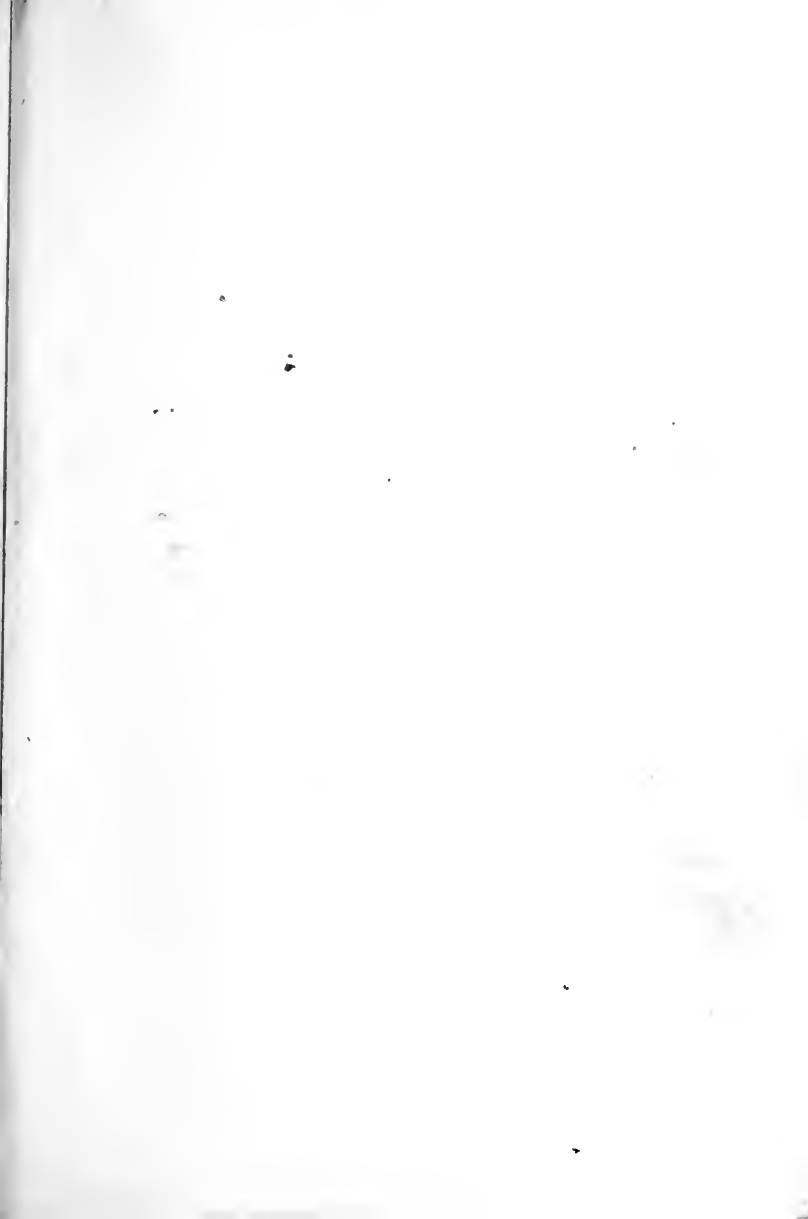
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IVAN TURGÉNIEFF

TRANSLATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S SANCTION

FROM THE FRENCH VERSION

By T. S. PERRY



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VIRGIN SOIL.

I.

IN the spring of 1868, toward one o'clock in the afternoon, a young man about twenty-seven years old, negligently and even shabbily clad, was ascending the back-stairs of a five-storied house in Officers street, at St. Petersburg. Shuffling up in his worn-out galoshes, and balancing awkwardly his clumsy, misshapen body, he at last reached the last step of the staircase, and stopped before a dilapidated door which had been left half open, and then, without ringing the bell, but coughing loudly to announce his presence, he entered a narrow, half-lit anteroom.

"Is Neshdanof here?" he asked in a deep bass voice.

"No, it is I; come in!" a rather harsh woman's voice answered from the next room.

"Mashurina?" asked the new-comer.

"Yes—and you, Ostrodumof?"

"Pimen Ostrodumof."

He at once took off his galoshes, hung his threadbare coat on a nail, and entered the room whence the woman's voice had issued.

It was a dingy, low-studded room, with walls stained of a dull green, dimly lit by two dusty windows. Its furniture consisted of nothing but an iron bed in a corner, a table in the middle of the room, a few chairs, and a stand heaped up with piles of books.

Near the table was sitting a woman about thirty years old, bare-headed, clad in a black woolen dress, who was smoking a cigarette. When she saw Ostrodumof enter she held out her large red hand, without a word. He shook her hand also without a word, dropped into a chair, and took from his pocket the stump of a cigar.

Mashurina gave him light for his cigar, and both, without exchanging a word, or even a look, began to puff clouds of blue smoke into the close air of the room, which was already saturated with tobacco.

"Have you seen Neshdanof?" asked Ostrodumof at last.

"Yes; he's coming. He went to carry some books to the library."

"Why has he been running about so, lately?" said Ostrodumof, turning aside to spit. "It is impossible nowadays ever to find him."

"He's getting bored," she replied.

"Getting bored!" repeated Ostrodumof reproachfully. "What an absurdity! Just as if we had nothing to do! We are wondering how we shall get through with this job, and he's getting bored!"

"Has any letter come from Moscow?" asked Mashurina after a moment's pause.

"Yes, day before yesterday."

"Have you read it?"

Ostrodumof simply nodded his head.

"And what was in it?"

"We shall have to start soon."

Mashurina took the cigarette from her mouth. "Why so? I understood that everything was going on well there."

"Yes, everything is in pretty fair condition. But there is a man there who is not sure—you understand—he must be removed, or possibly got out of the way altogether. And then there are other things. You, too, you're called for."

"In the letter?"

"Yes, in the letter."

Mashurina tossed back her thick hair, which, carelessly braided and fastened behind, was falling over her forehead and brows.

"Very well," she said; "if that is the order there is nothing to be said."

"Of course. But without money it can't be done, and where is the money to come from?"

Mashurina reflected.

"Neshdanof must get some," she said in a low voice, as if talking to herself.

"It was just for that I came," remarked Ostrodumof.

"You have the letter with you?" asked Mashurina suddenly.

"Yes. Do you want to read it?"

"Give it to me. No, don't; we will read it together later."

"I told you the truth," muttered Ostrodumof; "you need not doubt me."

"Oh, I know you did."

They were again silent, and again the little puffs of smoke escaping from their silent lips mounted in light spirals above their curly heads. There was a sound of steps in the anteroom.

"There he is!" murmured Mashurina.

The door was thrust open and a head slipped through the opening, but it was not Neshdanof's. It was a round face; the hair was black and coarse, the forehead broad and wrinkled; the little brown eyes moved restlessly beneath the thick eyebrows; a nose like a duck's beak, turned up at the end, and a little rosy mouth made up the rest of the face.

This head looked around, bowed, smiled—showing two rows of little white teeth—and entered the room at the same time with a feeble, short-armed body, and legs half bandy, half lame.

On seeing him both Mashurina and Ostrodumof wore on their faces the same expression of indulgent disdain, very much as if they had said to themselves, "Oh, it's only he." They made no movement and uttered no sound. But the new arrival so far from being discouraged at this reception seemed rather to be pleased with it.

"What does this mean?" he cried with a squeaking voice. "A duet? Why not a trio? But where is the first tenor?"

"Is it Neshdanof you mean, Mr. Pakline?" asked Ostrodumof with an earnest air.

"Yes, exactly, Mr. Ostrodumof."

"He will probably return soon, Mr. Pakline"

"Delighted to hear it, Mr. Ostrodumof."

The little cripple turned toward Mashurina, who sat scowling, still smoking her cigarette.

"How do you do, my dear—my dear—oh, how stupid I am! I can never remember your first name, nor that of your father." *

Mashurina shrugged her shoulders.

"Why should I tell you them? You know my surname. What more do you want? And why do you ask how I am? You see I'm not dead."

"True, perfectly true!" cried Pakline, inflating his nostrils and moving his uneven eyebrows. "If you were dead your very humble servant would not have the pleasure of seeing you here and of talking with you. Consider my questions as the result of an old bad habit. As for the name, and your father's name—you see it seems queer for me to call you Mashurina simply. I know you always sign your letters Bonaparte—I mean Mashurina—but nevertheless—in talking. . . ."

"But who asked you to talk to me?"

Pakline gave a little nervous laugh, as if he had swallowed something the wrong way.

"Come, come, my dove, don't be angry, give me your hand. You are very good, I know, and I am not so bad. Come."

Pakline held out his hand. Mashurina looked at him frowningly, but yet she stretched out her own.

"You are very anxious to know my Christian name," she said, without changing her expression; "well, it is Fiokla." †

"And mine Pimen," added Ostrodumof's deep voice.

"Ah, this is very instructive, very instructive; but then

* In Russia it is seldom that any one is addressed in conversation by his surname; the Christian name alone would be too intimate or too familiar. The customary form of address—which has the advantage of being familiar with inferiors and respectful with superiors—is like the ancient Greek formula, Achilles Peliades, or son of Peleus. Thus the author of this novel is called Ivan Sergeitch, that is to say, Ivan the son of Serge.—*Tr.*

† That is, Thekla.—*Tr.*

tell me, O Fiokla, and you, O Pimen, why you always treat me so coldly, while I—”

“Mashurina thinks, and she is not alone in her opinion,” interrupted Ostrodumof, “that it is impossible to have confidence in you because you always look at things from the ridiculous side.”

Pakline turned quickly on his heels.

“Ah, those who judge me always make the same mistake, my dear Pimen. In the first place, I’m not always laughing, and then it doesn’t mean anything, and it is possible to have confidence in me. The proof of this is the flattering confidence which has been shown me more than once by your friends. I’m an honest man, my dear Pimen.”

Ostrodumof muttered something between his teeth, and Pakline, shaking his head, repeated, but this time without a smile, “No, I’m not always laughing; I’m not a happy man; just look at me!”

Ostrodumof raised his eyes to his face. In fact, when Pakline was not laughing or talking, his face wore an expression of sadness mingled with dread; this expression became comical and even mischievous the moment he opened his mouth. But Ostrodumof kept silence. Pakline turned again toward Mashurina.

“And how are your studies getting on? Are you making progress in your philanthropic art? It must be a hard business helping an inexperienced citizen to make his first appearance in the world, eh?”

“Oh, not at all, provided the little citizen is not much bigger than you are,” answered Mashurina smiling with a satisfied air.

Mashurina had just received the diploma of midwife. Eighteen months before she had left her family—who were nobles of moderate wealth in the south of Russia—and she had come to St. Petersburg with six rubles in her pocket; she had entered the school of obstetrics, and by hard work she had reached the grade she wanted. She was unmarried and very chaste. “Nothing remarkable!” a skeptic will cry, remembering what we said of her appearance. “An astonishing and rare thing,” we shall take the liberty of saying in our turn.

While waiting for Mashurina's answer Pakline began to laugh.

"A fair hit!" he said. "Ah, you're quick at repartee! That will be a lesson for me. Well, why have I remained so small? But our friend doesn't return. I wonder what he is about."

Pakline changed the subject of conversation intentionally. He had never been able to resign himself to his microscopic figure, to his frail physique. These physical faults were so much the more painful to him, because he adored women. To please them, what would he not have given? The consciousness of deformity tormented him more cruelly than the lowliness of his birth or the mediocrity of his position. Pakline's father, a simple citizen who had become honorary counselor by various tricks, had been a sort of business man who was consulted in matters requiring arbitration, and to whom was occasionally confided the management of an estate or a house. In business of this sort he had accumulated a modest competency; but having taken to drink in his old age, he had left nothing behind him. The young Pakline was named Sila Samsonitch, that is to say, Strength, son of Samson (which he thought was another mockery of fate); he was educated in a commercial college, where he had learned German very thoroughly. After many disagreeable adventures he at last found a place in a counting-house that brought him in a salary of fifteen hundred rubles. With these slender means he supported not only himself, but also a sick aunt, and his sister, who was a hunchback. He was just twenty-seven years old at the time our story begins. He had struck acquaintance with a great number of students, youths whom he pleased by his hardy cynicism, by cheerfulness and impudence, and by his learning, which was limited, to be sure, but, so far as it went, sound and void of pedantry. That did not prevent his sometimes being made fun of by them. One day, for example, when he happened to be late at a political meeting, and began modestly to apologize, a voice in a corner began to sing, "Our poor Pakline is a most valiant warrior," and every one burst out laughing. Finally Pakline joined in the laughter, although his heart was black with anger.

"The rascal has put his finger on the sore spot," he said to himself.

He had made Neshdanof's acquaintance in a Greek eating-house where he took his meals, and where he uttered very free and very pronounced opinions. He used to pretend that the original cause of these democratic tendencies was just this atrocious Greek cooking, which disturbed his liver.

"Yes; where the devil can he be?" repeated Pakline. "I've noticed he has been out of sorts for some time. Can he be in love?"

Mashurina frowned.

"He has gone to the library to get some books. As for being in love, he has other fish to fry, and besides, with whom could it be?"

"With you," Pakline was on the point of answering, but he contented himself with saying:

"I want to talk with him on some important matters."

"What matters?" asked Ostrodumof. "Our business?"

"Yours, perhaps—ours, I mean."

Ostrodumof uttered an *ahem*! He felt a certain mistrust, but he said to himself at once, "After all, who knows? This eel creeps in everywhere."

"Here he is at last," said Mashurina suddenly, and in her dark-ringed eyes, turned toward the door of the ante-room, there had flashed a sort of warm and tender glow, like a little luminous spot.

The door opened, and there entered this time a young man of twenty-three, with a cap on his head and a pile of books under his arm; it was Neshdanof.

II.

WHEN he saw the three visitors, Neshdanof stopped on the threshold, glanced at them all, threw off his cap, let his books fall carelessly upon the floor, and, without saying a word, sat down on the foot of his bed.

His pleasant face, with its fair complexion, which the dark tint of his thick, ruddy-brown hair made appear even fairer, expressed discontent and vexation. Mashurina turned away a little, biting her lip. Ostrodumof murmured, "At last !"

Pakline approached Neshdanof.

"What has happened to you, Alexis Dimitrivitch, Russian Hamlet? Has any one made you angry? Or have you fallen into this melancholy fit all by yourself?"

"Leave me alone, Mephistopheles," answered Neshdanof impatiently. "I've not time to waste sharpening my wits against yours."

Pakline began to laugh.

"You don't express yourself correctly, my dear fellow; what is naturally dull can't be made sharp."

"Very good, very good; we all know how witty you are."

"And you, your nerves are in a wretched state," answered Pakline slowly. "Has anything extraordinary really happened to you?"

"Nothing extraordinary; it only happens that no one can put his nose out of doors in this vile place without running across some villainy, some foolishness, some absurd injustice, some stupidity. It's impossible to live here."

"That's why you have advertised for a situation, and why you would like to leave St. Petersburg," Ostrodumof went on muttering.

"Certainly I shall leave, and gladly, provided I can find any one stupid enough to offer me a place."

"First of all, one should perform his duty *here*," said Mashurina meaningly, but with her eyes still averted.

"That is to say?" asked Neshdanof, wheeling about. Mashurina closed her lips.

"Ostrodumof will explain," she said finally.

Neshdanof turned toward Ostrodumof, but he coughed and said merely :

"By and by."

"Come, seriously," continued Pakline, "have you heard anything disagreeable?"

Neshdanof sprang from the bed, as if impelled by a spring.

"Eh! what is there that isn't disagreeable?" he shouted. "Half of Russia is starving; the *Moscow Gazette* is triumphant; they are introducing classicism amongst us; they forbid students forming subscription clubs; there is spying everywhere, and denunciation, lying, and treachery; no one can take a single step. And all that is not enough! He must have some *other* disagreeable thing! He asks me if I am speaking seriously."

"Bassanof has been arrested," he added, lowering his voice; "some one just told me at the library."

Ostrodumof and Mashurina raised their heads at the same time.

"My dear Alexis Dimitrivitch," began Pakline, "you are agitated, naturally—but do you forget at what time, in what country you are living? With us the drowning man must make his own wisp of straw to catch at. There is no use indulging our feelings over it! See, my friend, we must learn to look the devil in the face, and not lose our temper like children."

"Oh! stop, please! That's enough," interrupted Neshdanof in agony, his features drawn as if by physical pain. "We understand, you are an energetic man, you're not afraid of anything or anybody—"

"Afraid of anybody, I?" murmured Pakline. "Come, come!"

"But who could have betrayed Bassanof? I don't understand that at all."

"Some friend, of course!" Pakline added quickly

"Friends can't be beaten in that line. It is with them one has always to be on his guard. I, for instance, I had a friend, such a good fellow! he grew anxious about me, about my reputation. One day he came to my room: 'Just fancy,' he said to me, 'what a stupid calumny has been spread abroad about you; they say you poisoned your uncle; that in a house where you had just been introduced you turned your back on your hostess, and stayed so all the evening, while she, poor woman, was crying with mortification. What stupidity! What idiots people must be to invent such scandalous stories!' Well, only think, the next year I happened to quarrel with him, and I received a letter from him, in which he said, 'You, who have killed your uncle! You, who were not ashamed to insult a worthy lady by turning your back on her!' etc., etc. That's what friends are!"

Ostrodumof exchanged a glance with Mashurina.

"Alexis Dimitrivitch," he began in his deep voice, evidently desiring to put an end to this waste of words, "we have received from Moscow a letter from Vasily Nicolaïvitch."

Neshdanof gave a little start and lowered his eyes.

"What does he say?" he asked at last.

"She and I," Ostrodumof indicated his neighbor by a slight movement of the eyebrows, "we are to leave."

"What! Is she summoned too?"

"She is."

"Well, why do you delay?"

"For a very simple reason—lack of money."

Neshdanof stood up and walked toward the window.

"How much do you need?"

"Fifty rubles, not a kopeck less."

Neshdanof was silent for a moment.

"I haven't so much at this moment," he muttered, beating the pane with his fingers, "but—I can get it. I will get it. Have you the letter with you?"

"The letter! It—that is to say—of course—"

"Why do you always affect secrecy before me?" asked Pakline. "Have I not deserved your confidence? and even if I should not sympathize entirely with—your pro-

jects—do you really think I would betray or let out your secret?”

“Unintentionally perhaps,” growled Ostrodumof.

“Neither with nor without intention! There is Miss Mashurina, who looks at me and smiles—and I tell you—”

“I’m not smiling at all,” answered Mashurina angrily.

“And I tell you, gentlemen,” continued Pakline, “that you don’t show the least sagacity, that you can’t distinguish our real friends! Because some one laughs now and then, you imagine he can’t be in earnest—”

“Exactly!” answered Mashurina in the same tone.

“See, for instance,” Pakline went on, without noticing the interruption, “you need money—Neshdanof at this moment has none—well, I can give you some.”

Neshdanof suddenly left the window.

“No, no, what’s the use? I shall get some. I shall draw my money in advance. I remember, *they* owe me something. But, by the way, Ostrodumof, show me the letter.”

Ostrodumof remained motionless for a moment, then he looked around, leaned forward, pulled up the leg of his trousers, and drew from his boot a carefully folded piece of paper; he blew on the paper—no one knows why—and handed it to Neshdanof.

He, after unfolding and reading it carefully, gave it to Mashurina, who, having risen from her chair, read it in her turn and gave it back to Neshdanof, although Pakline held out his hand to take it. Neshdanof shrugged his shoulders and silently offered the letter to Pakline, who, after he had read it, pursed his lips together in a significant way, and put it on the table without saying a word. Then Ostrodumof struck a large match, which gave forth a strong smell of sulphur, and after he had lifted the paper above his head as if to show it to them all, he set fire to it with the match and let it burn to the last scrap, without sparing his fingers; then he threw the ash into the fire.

No one had uttered a word nor moved during this performance. All looked at the floor; Ostrodumof seemed sunk in serious meditation; Neshdanof’s face wore an almost savage expression; Pakline’s indicated an anxious

struggle ; as for Mashurina, she seemed to be assisting at a solemn religious ceremony.

Two minutes passed in this way. Then they all felt a little embarrassed. It was Pakline who first broke the silence.

"Well," said he, "do you accept, yes or no, my offering on the altar of my country? May I contribute, if not fifty rubles, at least twenty-five or thirty for the common cause?"

Neshdanof burst out suddenly. The bad temper which was seething within him, and had been only in part appeased by the burning of the letter, was but awaiting an opportunity to show itself.

"I told you it was useless—do you understand, useless! I shall not permit it—I shall not take the money! I shall get some, and at once. I don't need any one's aid."

"Come, my friend," said Pakline, "I see you're a revolutionist, but you're not a democrat."

"Say at once that I'm an aristocrat!"

"Well, certainly you're an aristocrat—up to a certain point."

Neshdanof laughed constrainedly.

"You refer to my irregular birth. You're taking unnecessary trouble, my dear fellow. There's no need of your reminding me."

"Why, Alexis, what ails you? How can you take what I say in this way? You seem very strange to-day." Neshdanof moved his head and shoulders impatiently. "The arrest of Bassanof has upset you—but then he was so imprudent—"

"He said whatever he thought," remarked Mashurina gloomily. "It's not for us to blame him."

"True, but he might have thought of the others whom perhaps he is compromising now."

"Why do you think that of him?" roared Ostrodumof in his turn. "Bassanof is a very energetic man. He will not betray any one. And as for prudence—do you want to know my opinion? It is not given to every one to be prudent, Mr. Pakline."

Pakline, who was offended, was on the point of replying, but Neshdanof cut him short.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "listen to me ; let us leave politics alone for a while."

There was a silence. It was again Pakline who started the conversation.

"I met Skoropikin this morning, the great esthetic critic of all the Russias. What an unendurable creature ! Always sparkling and bubbling ! He reminds you of a bottle of kislitchi.* The waiter who has poured it out tries to stop it with his finger instead of a cork ; a swollen grape-seed sticks in the neck of the bottle ; it spurts and hisses, and when all the foam is gone, there is nothing left at the bottom of the bottle but a few drops of vile stuff which does not quench your thirst, and gives you a colic to boot. This Skoropikin is a man who is dangerous for young people."

The comparison Pakline had made, exact as it was, did not bring a smile to the face of any one. Ostrodumof alone said that young people who were capable of taking an interest in "esthetics" did not deserve pity, even if the great critic made them lose their good sense.

"Oh ! but I beg your pardon ! allow me !" said Pakline hotly (he always grew more excited the less he was approved) ; "the question, although not a political one, is yet very important. If we can believe Skoropikin, every ancient work of art is worthless, just because it is ancient. But, in that case, art is nothing but fashion, and there is no use talking about it seriously ! If in art there is not something unvariable, eternal, the devil may take it ! In science, in the mathematics, for example, do you consider Euler, Laplace, Gauss, as old, worn-out hacks ? No ; you recognize their authority. But for you, Raphael and Mozart are idiots, and your pride revolts against their authority. The laws of art are harder to discover than those of science, I confess ; but they exist, and he who denies their existence is blind, whether willfully or not is of little importance."

Pakline stopped. They all remained silent, as if each had bitten his tongue, or as if they felt great compassion for him. Ostrodumof alone growled out :

* A fermented, effervescent drink, containing raisins, sugar, etc.—*Tr.*

"All that doesn't prevent my having no regard for the young men who let themselves be stupefied by Skoropikin."

"Let them go to the devil! I'm off!" said Pakline to himself.

He had come to Neshdanof's room to express his views on the introduction into Russia of copies of the *Polar Star* (the *Cloche* was already discontinued at that time); but the conversation having taken so unfortunate a turn, he thought it more prudent not to discuss the matter.

He was already taking up his hat, when suddenly, before any previous sound had given them warning, a voice was heard in the anteroom.

"Is Mr. Neshdanof at home?"

It was a very agreeable, modulated, full baritone voice; the tone suggested ideas of distinction, of perfect elegance, even of exquisite perfumes. They all looked at one another in amazement.

"Is Mr. Neshdanof at home?" the voice repeated.

"Yes," Neshdanof at last replied.

The door was gently opened with a light, uniform movement, and on the threshold appeared a man about forty years old, tall, well made, almost majestic, who, slowly removing his hat, disclosed a handsome head with close-cut hair. He was dressed in a superb overcoat of English cloth, the collar of which, although it was the end of April, was lined with beaver; the visitor struck them all, Neshdanof, Pakline, Mashurina herself—even Ostrodumof—by the noble ease of his bearing and the kindly serenity of his approach.

They all rose involuntarily when they saw him appear.

III.

THIS elegant visitor walked toward Neshdanof, and said, with an affable smile :

"I have already had the pleasure of meeting and even of talking with you, Mr. Neshdanof—the day before yesterday, if you remember, at the theater."

Here he paused, waiting for a reply. Neshdanof nodded his head and blushed.

"Yes ; and to-day I have come to see you on account of the advertisement you put in the paper. I should like to talk this over with you, if it will not inconvenience your friends."

He bowed to Mashurina, and waved his hand, encased in a *gant de Suède*, toward Ostrodumof and Pakline. "And if I do not disturb them—"

"Not at all, not at all !" answered Neshdanof constrainedly ; "my friends will be very glad—won't you be good enough to take a chair ?"

The visitor bowed graciously and took hold of the back of a chair, but he did not sit down—for everybody in the room was standing—and turned his bright and sharp, though half-closed, eyes in every direction.

"Good-by, Alexis Dimitrivitch," said Mashurina suddenly ; "I shall be in again soon."

"So shall I," added Ostrodumof ; "so shall I, very soon."

And with a sort of bravado Mashurina, going past the visitor, took Neshdanof's hand, which she shook heartily, and then left the room, without bidding any one else good-by. Ostrodumof followed her out, stamping his heels on the floor rather more loudly than was necessary ; he even shrugged his shoulders twice, as if to say, "So much for you and your beaver collar !"

The visitor's eyes followed them with a polite but some-

what curious look, which was then turned on Pakline, as if with the expectation that he would follow the two others. But Pakline, whose face, since the new-comer's arrival, wore a sort of repressed smile, had shrunk into himself and retreated into a corner. When he saw this, the visitor sat down. Neshdanof did the same.

"My name is Sipiagin ; it is, perhaps, not wholly unknown to you," he began with self-conscious modesty.

But, first of all, it must be told how Neshdanof met him at the theater. The play was Alexander Ostrovsky's "Don't Sit in Another's Sleigh." Early in the morning Neshdanof had gone to the box-office, which was crowded. He had intended to take a place in the pit, but as he was approaching the little window, an officer close behind him held out a three ruble bill over Neshdanof's head, saying to the ticket-seller :

"You will probably have to give this gentleman change. I've just the right sum here ; give me, please, an orchestra chair on the second row. I'm in something of a hurry."

"Excuse me, sir," said Neshdanof curtly. "I want an orchestra chair on the second row, too."

With these words he tossed the ticket-seller a three-ruble bill, his whole fortune, and that evening he found himself in the aristocratic part of the Alexandra Theater. Being rather ill dressed and without gloves, in unblacked boots, he felt ill at ease and angry with himself for his mortification. His neighbor on the right was a general, glittering with decorations, and on the left was his present visitor, Privy Counsellor Sipiagin, whose arrival two days later was destined to so amaze Mashurina and Ostrodumof.

The general cast his eyes at intervals toward Neshdanof, as if he were some unpleasant object, disagreeable and even painful to the sight ; as for Sipiagin, his side glances were not at all unfriendly. Those among whom Neshdanof was sitting were great personages ; they all knew one another, and they exchanged short phrases, compliments, and simple exclamations, which sometimes passed over Neshdanof's head, as had been the case that morning at the box-office. He sat quiet but unhappy in his broad, comfortable chair, feeling like a Pariah. Shame, bitterness,

all sorts of evil emotions filled his heart. Suddenly, to his great surprise, his left-hand neighbor, not the decorated general, but the other, who wore no orders on his chest, addressed him politely with an air of kindness and an apparent desire to please. He spoke of the play; he asked Neshdanof, as a representative of the younger generation, what he thought of the piece. Astonished, almost frightened, Neshdanof answered at first only in monosyllables, in a broken voice—to tell the truth, his heart was beating strongly. Then he felt angry with himself again: why in the world should he be so disturbed? Wasn't his neighbor a man like any one else?

He began to express his ideas without hesitation and without reserve; finally, he grew so enthusiastic and spoke so loudly, that his right-hand neighbor was evidently irritated. Neshdanof was a warm admirer of Ostrovsky; but with all his respect for the talent shown by the author in this comedy, he could not commend his evident inclination to throw contempt on civilization, such as was but too plain in his exaggerated drawing of Vikhoref.* His good-natured neighbor listened to him attentively and pleasantly, and when the next act was over, he resumed the conversation, not about Ostrovsky's comedy, but more generally on every-day matters, and scientific and political questions. He was evidently interested in his young and eloquent acquaintance. Not only had Neshdanof overcome his shyness, but at times he put on steam, as they say.

"Ah!" he thought to himself, "you are inquisitive, are you? I'll show you something for your pains."

As for his neighbor on the other side, what he felt was no longer discomfort, but indignation and suspicion. At the end of the play Sipiagin took leave of Neshdanof in the most friendly way, although without asking his name or giving his own.

* In the play Vikhoref is a ruined spendthrift, who wins the love of the daughter of a rich merchant in a small town, and abducts her, in order that their marriage may not be prevented. Whether intentionally or not, the author has contrasted the patriarchal simplicity of old times with modern depravity.

While he was waiting for his carriage in front of the theater, he met one of his intimate friends, Prince G., an aide-de-camp of the Emperor.

"I saw you from my box," said the prince smiling through his perfumed mustaches. "Do you know who it was you were talking to?"

"No, I do not, do you?"

"A bright fellow, isn't he?"

"Very bright. Who is he?"

"My brother; yes, my brother. A natural son of my father—he's named Neshdanof. I'll tell you about it—my father didn't expect him, that's why he named him Neshdanof. * But he took an interest in him—*Il lui a fait un sort*. We give him an allowance. He's an intelligent fellow; thanks to my father, he has received a good education. Only he is a fanatic, a republican. We see nothing of him—quite out of the question, you know. But there's my carriage. Good night!"

The prince drove off. The next day Sipiagin came across Neshdanof's advertisement and he went to see him.

"My name is Sipiagin," he said to Neshdanof, taking his seat on a straw chair opposite the young man, whom he scrutinized carefully. "I saw in the paper that you are anxious to find a situation with some family, and this is what I have come to propose to you. I am married; I have a son nine years old, a bright little boy, I'm not ashamed to say. We shall go into the country for a part of the summer and the autumn, in the district of S., five versts from the principal town. Would you not like to accompany us during the vacation, to teach my son Russian and history, the two subjects you mention in your advertisement? I venture to think that you would find my family and my place agreeable. There's a fine garden, a pretty river, the air is pleasant, the house is large—do you agree? In that case, you have only to let me know your terms, although I suppose," he added with a light smile, "that there cannot be any difficulty between us on that matter."

* *i. e.*, unexpected.—*Tr.*

All the time that Sipiagin was talking, Neshdanof kept his eyes fixed on him ; he looked at his narrow, low, but intelligent forehead, his Roman nose, with its delicate lines, his pleasant eyes, his regular lips, whence issued a stream of courteous words, his side whiskers, like an Englishman's—he looked at him and did not know what to think.

“What does all this mean ?” he said to himself. “Why does this man seem to be making advances to me ? This aristocrat—and I : how does it happen that we are together ? What has brought him here ?”

He was so buried in his reflections that he did not open his mouth, even when Sipiagin, having finished his little speech, became silent, and waited for an answer. Sipiagin glanced into the inner room where Pakline had taken refuge, and was now staring at him quite as earnestly as Neshdanof. Perhaps the presence of this third person kept Neshdanof silent.

Sipiagin elevated his eyebrows resignedly, as if he accepted the strangeness of the situation into which he had voluntarily put himself ; then he raised his voice and repeated his question.

Neshdanof felt a slight tremor.

“Certainly,” he said quickly. “I—agree—with much pleasure—although I must say—I can't help being a little surprised—without any references—and then what I said day before yesterday, at the theater, might so well have displeased you—”

“You are entirely mistaken, as to that, my dear Mr. Alexis—Alexis Dimitrivitch, if I am not mistaken,” said Sipiagin smiling. “As for myself, I can say frankly that I am known to be a man of liberal and advanced views ; and your ideas, with the exception—if you will kindly permit me to mention it—of a certain exaggeration, peculiar to youth,—your ideas, I repeat, in no way contradict my own. I may add, indeed, that their youthful ardor pleases me.”

Sipiagin spoke without the slightest hesitation ; his smooth, rounded utterances flowed, according to the Russian expression, like honey on oil.

“My wife shares my views,” he went on ; “possibly her views are more like yours than they are like mine ; that is

very natural, she is younger than I. When I saw in the paper, the day after I met you, your name, which, let me say parenthetically, I learned at the theater, and which you had printed in full, contrary to the usual custom, with your address, the fact struck me. I saw in that—in that coincidence—a sort of—you will kindly overlook my superstitions,—a sort of special Providence. You speak of references, but I don't care for them. Your appearance, your character, arouse my sympathy ; that is enough for me. I am accustomed to trust to my first impressions in these matters. So I can hope—you will agree."

"I agree, of course," answered Neshdanof, "and I shall try to deserve your confidence. Yet let me tell you now that I am ready to teach your son his lessons, but that I don't feel competent to do any more. I don't feel capable of undertaking anything else, and I want to be free. I am unwilling to give up my liberty."

Sipiagin waved his hand, as if he were waving away a fly.

"Don't be uneasy, my very dear sir ; no one would think of asking more of you, and besides, I don't care for a private tutor who shall be with him all the time and look out for his manners. I only want some one to superintend his lessons, and that I have found. And now, the conditions ? The pecuniary conditions ? The vile metal ?"

Neshdanof kept silence from embarrassment. "Listen to me," said Sipiagin, bending his whole body forward, and amicably touching Neshdanof's knee ; "between gentlemen, a word is enough. I offer you a hundred rubles a month ; your traveling expenses going and coming of course are to be charged to me. Is that right ?"

Neshdanof flushed again.

"That is a great deal more than I had intended to ask for—for I—"

"Very well ; exactly !" interrupted Sipiagin. "I consider this settled, and I look upon you as one of us."

He rose from his chair with an air of delight, as if some one had just given him a present. A sort of kindly, almost childlike familiarity suddenly appeared in all his movements.

"We are going away in a few days," he resumed, in an easy tone. "I like to see the opening of spring in the country, although my work makes me a very prosaic man, chained to the city. You will allow me to consider that your first month begins to-day. My wife and son are already at Moscow. She went on before me. We shall find them in the country, in the heart of nature. You and I—we will go on together—like a couple of bachelors. Ha, ha!"

Sipiagin's laugh was brief, somewhat nasal, but otherwise pleasant enough.

"And now?"

He drew from his coat pocket a little black card-case, bordered with silver, from which he took a card.

"Here is my address in St. Petersburg. Will you not come and see me to-morrow, about noon? We will talk some more together. I should like to give you some of my notions about education—and then we can settle on the day for leaving."

Sipiagin took Neshdanof's hand.

"By the way," he added confidentially, "if you need anything in advance, I beg of you, don't stand on ceremony. A whole month, if you care for it."

Neshdanof did not know exactly what to say; he looked, without being able to make up his mind, at the radiant, prepossessing face which was so strange to him, and yet, coming near his own, smiled at him so benevolently.

"You don't need any, eh?" whispered Sipiagin.

"If you will allow me, I'll tell you to-morrow," answered Neshdanof at last.

"Very well! Good-by, then, till to-morrow!"

Sipiagin dropped the young man's hand, and prepared to leave.

"Allow me one question," said Neshdanof suddenly. "You said just now that you learned my name at the theater. Who told it to you?"

"Who? one of your acquaintances, a relative of yours, I think, a prince—Prince G."

"The aide-de-camp?"

"Yes."

Neshdanof blushed—more deeply than ever—and opened

his mouth. But he closed it without saying a word. Sip-iagin again squeezed his hand, this time silently, bowed to him and to Pakline, put on his hat when he reached the threshold, and went away wearing in his face a complacent smile ; it expressed the conviction of the deep impression his visit could not have failed to make.

IV.

SIPAGIN had hardly left the room when Pakline sprang from his chair, and, hastening toward Neshdanof, began to congratulate his friend.

"That's getting a big fish in your net," he said with a laugh, shifting from one foot to another. "Do you know who Sipiagin is? He is a very well-known man, a chamberlain, a pillar of society, if I may use the phrase, a future minister."

"I have never heard of him," said Neshdanof somewhat sullenly.

Pakline flung up his arms as if in despair. "That's just our misfortune, Alexis Dimitritch, that we don't know anybody. We want to do something, to turn the world upside down, and we live wholly outside of the world; we know only our two or three friends, we are forever going around in the same little groove—"

"Excuse me," interrupted Neshdanof, "that's not exactly it. It's only that we refuse to have anything to do with our enemies. As to our own set, as to the people, we are always in communication with them."

"Tra, la, la!" interrupted Pakline in his turn. "In the first place, as for enemies, let me recall those lines of Goethe's:

"Who will the poet understand,
Must go into the poet's land."

and I say,

"Who will the enemy understand,
Must go into the enemy's land."

To live away from one's enemies, to remain in ignorance of their life and manners—it's an absurdity—an absurdity! To track a wolf in the forest, you must know first all his hiding-places. Then you just spoke of being in communi-

cation with the people, my dear friend. In 1862 the Poles took to the woods, and now it's we who are doing the same thing and taking to the woods; that is to say, to the people, who are more hostile and deader to us than any forest."

"Well, what do you think is to be done?"

"The Hindoos throw themselves beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut," continued Pakline gloomily; "it crushes them and they die happy. We have our Juggernaut; it will crush us, that's very certain, but it will not make us the least bit happy."

"But what do you think is to be done?" repeated Neshdanof, almost shouting. "Should we write novels with an especial object?"

Pakline opened his arms and leaned his head to one side.

"You at any rate can write novels, because you have literary tastes. Come, don't be angry. I won't say it again. I know you don't like to hear that alluded to. Besides, I agree with you, it's not a very delightful occupation manufacturing such things, stuffing them with all the new-fashioned phrases. 'Oh, I love you!' she *burst forth*. 'I don't care for that,' he *hurled back*. That's why I tell you to go into all classes of society, beginning with the highest. It is not enough to rely on the Ostrodumofs. They are worthy people, kindly but stupid. Just look at our friend! Nothing about him, not even the soles of his boots, reminds you of intelligent people. See, why did he go away from here just now? In order not to stay in the same room, not to breathe the same air as an aristocrat!"

"I must beg of you not to talk of Ostrodumof in that way before me!" cried Neshdanof warmly. "He wears thick boots because they are cheap."

"That's not what I meant," began Pakline.

"He don't want to stay in the same room with an aristocrat," continued Neshdanof raising his voice. "Well, I approve of him for just that. And, moreover, he is capable of sacrifice, and if it were necessary he would face death, which is more than you or I would ever do."

Pakline, with a pitiful face, pointed to his little crooked legs.

"How could I fight, my dear friend?—but let's talk of

something else. I tell you I am very glad that you are connected with Mr. Sipiagin, and I foresee the great advantage this will be to our work. You will be in high life, you will see the lionesses, those women with velvet bodies over steel springs, as the *Lettres sur l'Espagne* say ; study them, my friend, study them ! If you were an epicurean I should be alarmed about you,—I should. But that's not the reason you take the situation, is it ?”

“I took the situation to keep body and soul together,” answered Neshdanof ; “and to keep out of your way for a time, too,” he added to himself.

“Of course, of course, that's why I repeat my advice ; observe, study ! What a perfume he's left behind him, that gentleman !” Pakline threw back his head to sniff the air. “It's just the perfume of amber which the mayor's wife in the *Revisor* used to dream of.”

“He asked Prince G. about me,” said Neshdanof, in a low voice, having gone back to the window ; “probably he knows my whole story by this time.”

“Not probably, but certainly. What difference does that make ? I'd be willing to bet that is what gave him the notion of taking you for his boy's tutor. Say what you will you are an aristocrat by birth ; yes, indeed, you are one of them ! But I've been here a long while, it's time for me to go to the office, to those vile speculators ! Good-by, my friend !”

Pakline started to leave, but he stopped and turned round.

“See here, Alexis,” he said in a coaxing tone, “just now you wouldn't let me—I know that now you are going to have some money, but still let me make a modest offering for the common cause. I can't be of service in any other way ; let me at least do my part with my purse. See, I put on the table a ten ruble bill ; is it accepted ?”

Neshdanof did not stir.

“Silence means consent. Thank you !” cried Pakline joyfully, and he disappeared.

Neshdanof remained alone. He continued to gaze out of his window into the narrow, gloomy courtyard, where the rays of the sun never penetrated even in summer ; and his face was as dark as the courtyard.

Neshdanof was, as we have learned, the son of Prince G,—a rich man, a general on the emperor's staff, and of his daughter's governess—a pretty girl, a former pupil in a school for young ladies of noble birth. She died the day Neshdanof was born. He was educated first at a boarding-school kept by a Swiss, an intelligent and rigorous teacher, and then he entered the University. He wanted to study law, but the general, his father, who detested the nihilists, compelled him to study "esthetic" subjects, as Neshdanof called them with bitter irony, that is to say, he made him enter the department of history and philology. His father used to see him at the most three or four times a year ; but he took an interest in his future, and at his death, had left for his benefit six thousand rubles, "in memory of Nastia" (his mother). The interest was to be paid him as an allowance by his brother, Prince G.

It was not inaccurately that Pakline called him an aristocrat ; everything about him recalled his origin : his small ears, hands, and feet, the possibly excessive delicacy of his features, his soft complexion, the beauty of his hair, the slight lisp of his sympathetic voice. He was terribly nervous, terribly irritable and impressionable, even capricious ; the false position in which, since infancy, he had found himself, had had a large share in making him sensitive ; but his innate generosity saved him from becoming suspicious and distrustful. This false position also explained the contradictions in his character. Although scrupulously fastidious, and ready to be disgusted by the merest trifle, he affected coarseness and cynicism in his speech ; naturally an idealist, both passionate and chaste, at once bold and timid, he blamed himself for this timidity, this purity, as if it were a shameful defect, and he held it his duty to ridicule the ideal side of things. He had a kind heart, and kept away from people ; he was easily irritated, but he never nursed a grievance. He was angry with his father for obliging him to study esthetic subjects, and apparently he was interested in nothing but politics and social questions ; he preached—and with perfect conviction—the most advanced theories ; but in secret he adored poetry, art, and beauty in all its forms—he even wrote verses.

He used to hide very carefully the little note-book in which he wrote them, and of his Petersburg friends Pak-line alone—thanks to his great acuteness—suspected their existence. Nothing could so enrage Neshdanof as even a veiled allusion to his poetic tastes, which he looked upon as unpardonable weaknesses. His Swiss teacher had taught him a good many facts; he was not afraid of work; he even took it up with pleasure, though somewhat feverishly, and without persistence. His companions were very fond of him, being attracted by the sincerity, kindness, and purity which they saw in him. But poor Neshdanof was not born under a happy star; life was not easy to him. He felt his position keenly, and in spite of his friends' devotion, he always seemed to himself to be a lonely creature.

Left alone in his room, and still standing before the window, Neshdanof thought sadly of the journey he was about to take; of this novel, unexpected change in his mode of life. He was not sorry to go from St. Petersburg, because he would leave nothing particularly dear there; besides, was he not coming back in the autumn? And yet he seemed full of irresolution and possessed by involuntary melancholy.

"A singular tutor I shall make," he thought, "a strange teacher!"

He was almost angry with himself for forming this engagement, although in truth his anger was unjust. Neshdanof was sufficiently well educated, and in spite of his uncertain temper, children were not afraid of him, and very soon became fond of him.

The sadness which had now fallen upon him was merely from the impression which all melancholy, dreamy persons have when they are obliged to leave a place. Venturesome, sanguine characters do not know the feeling; they are more inclined to be glad when the current of their lives is broken, when there comes an opportunity to change their surroundings.

Neshdanof was plunged into such a deep revery that gradually, almost without knowing it, he began to put it into words, and his impressions fell into rhythm and rhyme.

"The devil!" he said aloud. "I really believe that I'm going to write some verses."

He shook himself and turned from the window; his eye was caught by the ruble bill which Pakline had left on the table; he put it into his pocket, and began to walk up and down the room.

"I must draw some money in advance," he said to himself, "since this gentleman has made the offer. A hundred rubles, and then from my brothers, their highnesses, another hundred. Fifty for what I owe, sixty or seventy for the journey, and the rest can go to Ostrodumof, together with Pakline's ten rubles. Besides, we shall get something from Markelof, too."

While he was making these calculations rhymes began to fly through his head. He stopped dreamily, and stood looking vaguely to one side. Then his hands groped their way, as it were, to the table-drawer, which they opened, and found at the bottom the little note-book covered with writing. He dropped into a chair in front of the table without changing the direction of his eyes, and then murmuring inaudibly, and from time to time tossing back his hair, he began to jot down verses.

The anteroom door opened half way, and Mashurina's head appeared. Neshdanof did not see her and went on with his work. Mashurina looked at him fixedly for a long time, and then shaking her head from side to side with an air of pity, she stepped back. But Neshdanof arose at once.

"Oh, it's you!" he said with some vexation, thrusting his note-book into the bottom of the drawer.

"Ostrodumof sent me," she said slowly, "to find out when we can receive the money. If you get any to-day, we shall leave this evening."

Neshdanof frowned.

"It's impossible to-day; come to-morrow."

"At what time?"

"At two o'clock."

"All right."

Mashurina was silent for a moment, and then suddenly holding out her hand to Neshdanof, said, "I'm afraid I've

disturbed you, excuse me. And then—I'm going away. Who knows whether we shall ever meet again? I wanted to say good-by."

Neshdanof shook Mashurina's red, cold hand.

"You saw my visitor just now?" he said. "I have come to an agreement with him. I'm going with him to his country-place, near S——."

A smile passed over Mashurina's face.

"Near S——! In that case we shall meet perhaps. We may be next in that direction."

Mashurina smiled again.

"Ah, Alexis Dimitritch."

"What is it?" asked Neshdanof.

Mashurina became more reserved.

"Nothing. Good-by. Nothing at all."

She pressed his hand again and disappeared.

"There's no one in all Petersburg who is so much attached to me as that strange girl," thought Neshdanof; "but she needn't have disturbed me. Well, it's all for the best."

The next morning Neshdanof made his way to Sipiagin's residence, and was introduced into a magnificent library, filled with elegant furniture, to accord with the dignity of the liberal statesman and gentleman. He sat down before a large writing-table on which, besides enormous paper-knives, which had never cut a leaf, lay heaps of periodicals, which had never been of the slightest service to any one. He listened for a whole hour to the intelligent, kindly, unctuous remarks of his host, received the hundred rubles which were advanced to him, and ten days later, the same Neshdanof, lying back on the velvet cushions of a first-class compartment, by the side of the same gentleman and wise and liberal statesman, was rolling toward Moscow over the rough, uneven rails of the Nicholas Railway.

V.

IN the parlor of a large brick house with a colonnade and elaborate pediment, built about 1825 by Sipiagin's father, who was a well-known agriculturist and "tooth-puller,"* Mme. Sipiagin—a very pretty woman, be it said by the way,—was expecting at every moment her husband's arrival, which had been announced by telegraph.

The whole arrangement of the parlor bore marks of delicate and modern taste; everything was pleasant and attractive; everything, from the medley of dyed stuffs and cretonnes, to the various forms of the porcelain, bronze, and metal vases, scattered over the tables and stands; all appeared in the clear, but subdued and harmonious light of a day in May, as it shone freely through the tall, wide-open windows. The air of the room was filled with the perfume of lilies-of-the-valley (bouquets of this delicious flower were set about here and there), and at times it was gently agitated by a light puff of wind that had passed over the rich grass of the garden.

It was a charming picture. And the lady herself, Valentine Michaelovna Sipiagin, completed the picture, giving it thought and life.

She was a tall woman about thirty years old; her hair was dark chestnut; her face, without great variety of color, but fresh, recalled that of the Sistine Madonna, with its velvety, deep eyes. Her lips were pale and somewhat thick, her shoulders a little high, her hands rather large. But on the whole, any one who had seen her in her parlor, going and coming easily and lightly—now bending her delicate, somewhat tightly-laced figure over a flower, to enjoy its per-

* A term formerly applied to gentlemen who were fond of inflicting corporal punishment on their serfs.

fume—now altering the position of some Chinese vase, or arranging her lustrous hair before the glass, half closing her handsome eyes—would certainly have said to himself, if not aloud, that he had never met a more beautiful creature.

A pretty, curly-headed little boy about seven, in a Highland dress and with bare legs, with his hair oiled and curled, came running into the room, but stopped short when he saw Madame Sipiagin.

"What is it, Kola?"* she said.

Her voice was as soft and as velvety as her eyes.

"It's—mamma—" the little boy hesitated, "aunt sent me here—and told me to get her some lilies-of-the-valley for her room. She hasn't any."

Valentine Michailovna took hold of her son's chin and lifted up his head.

"Tell your aunt to ask the gardener for some lilies-of-the-valley; these here belong to me—I don't want any one to touch them. Tell her I don't like to have anything disturbed that I have arranged. Can you tell her just what I've said?"

"I can—" stammered the little boy.

"Let us see; what are you going to say to her?"

"I shall tell her—I shall tell her—that you don't want her to."

Mme. Sipiagin began to laugh, and her laugh too was smooth and soft.

"I see I can't send messages by you yet. But it makes no difference, tell her the best way you can."

The little boy quickly kissed his mother's hand, all glistening with rings, and hurried from the room.

Mme. Sipiagin followed him with her eyes, sighed, and walked toward a gilded cage in which was a little green parrot climbing up the wires by its beak and claws; she teased it a little with the end of her finger and then dropping on a low sofa, she took from a carved table the last number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and lolling back on the sofa, began to turn over the pages.

* Diminutive of Nicholas.

A respectful cough made her lift her head. A solemn servant in livery, with a white cravat, stood on the threshold.

"What is it, Agathon?" she said in the same sweet voice.

"Simeon Petrovitch Kallomeïtsef. Shall I show him in?"

"Certainly. Ask him to come in. And tell Marianna Vikentievna that I should be very glad if she would come down into the parlor."

Simeon Petrovitch Kallomeïtsef was a young man of about thirty-two. His way of entering the room, easily and indifferently, almost languidly, then the sudden delight which flashed over his face, his bow somewhat to one side, and his quick straightening of himself as if he was moved by a spring, the slight nasal tone in his remarks to the mistress of the house, the respectful way in which he seized Valentine Michailovna's hand and kissed it with effusion—all this made it very plain that the new-comer was no provincial, no rich country neighbor, but a real citizen of St. Petersburg and of the first circles.

It may be added that he was dressed in the present English style. The side-pocket of his check coat was perfectly flat, and was surmounted by the triangular corner of his new white cambric handkerchief; his eyeglasses hung at the end of a broad black ribbon; his dull colored *gants de Suède* harmonized wonderfully with the pale gray tint of his plaid trousers.

Mr. Kallomeïtsef wore his hair short, and his beard was shaved smooth. His almost feminine face, with the little eyes near together, the small nose, and the soft lips, wore that expression of amiable complacency which suits the perfectly-trained gentleman. And yet this amiable face could readily assume a very bad or even a brutal expression when any one, no matter who, took the liberty of touching against one, no matter which, of Mr. Kallomeïtsef's conservative, patriotic, or religious principles—then he was pitiless. All his elegance was gone at once; his caressing eyes were lit up with an unholy fire; his little pink mouth gave expression to most violent words, and with cries like a peacock he would scream forth his authorities.

Kallomeïtsef was the descendant of simple gardeners,

His great-grandfather was named Kolomentsof, from the place of his birth ;* but his grandfather altered this name to Kolomeïtsef ; his father signed his name Kalomeïtsef ; and finally Simeon Petrovitch, having added an *l*, really considered himself a pure-blooded nobleman. He was fond of repeating that his family was directly descended from the Barons of Gallenmeyer, one of whom had been field-marshal in Austria at the time of the Thirty Years' War.

He had a place at court with the title of chamberlain ; patriotism had prevented his entering the diplomatic service to which everything about him seemed to point,—his education, his familiarity with society, his success with women, and his general air ; “*Mais quitter la Russie ? Jamais !*” he used to say in French.

He was well off, and he had powerful relatives ; he was looked upon as a rising man with talents, “although somewhat mediæval in his opinions,” according to the expression of Prince B., a well-known luminary of the official-world at St. Petersburg.

He had come to pass two months of vacation in the government of S——, to see to the management of his estates ; that is to say, “to frighten this man, and put the thumb-screws on that.” How could anything go on without such measures ?

“I expected to find Boris Andreïtch here,” he said, gracefully balancing himself on his toes, and then looking suddenly to one side, like a certain very great personage.

Mme. Sipiagin made a slight grimace.

“Otherwise you wouldn't have come ?”

Kallomeïtsef started back, so unjust and unreasonable did the question seem.

“Oh, madam !” he cried, “oh, how could you think—”

“Very well, then ; sit down. Boris Andreïtch will be here very soon. I have sent a carriage to the station. Be patient, you are going to see him. What time is it ?”

“Half past two,” said Kallomeïtsef, drawing from his waistcoat pocket a large enameled gold watch, which he showed to Mme. Sipiagin. “Did you ever see my watch ?”

* Kolomna, in the government of Moscow.

It's a present from Michael—you know—the Prince of Serbia—Obrenovitch. There is his coat-of-arms. We are great friends, he and I. What a charming fellow he is! and with all that he has a hand of iron, as a ruler should have. Oh! he permits no nonsense. No, no!"

Kallomeïtsef stretched himself in his easy-chair, crossed his legs, and began slowly to remove the glove from his left hand.

"Oh, if we only had a man of that sort in our government of S——."

"What? Who is it that displeases you?"

Kallomeïtsef turned up his nose.

"This *zemstvo*, you see, this *zemstvo*; what is the good of it? It only weakens the administration and gives rise to unprofitable ideas" (Kallomeïtsef began to wave his ungloved hand in the air to restore the impeded circulation), "and vain hopes" (here he blew upon his hand). "I have said all that at Petersburg, *mais, bah!* the wind doesn't blow from that quarter. Your husband, too, only think of it! Besides, he's known as a liberal."

Mme. Sipiagin sat up straight on the sofa.

"What! and you too, 'M'sieu' Kallomeïtsef, you belong to the opposition?"

"I? To the opposition? Never. Nothing could tempt me. *Mais, j'ai mon franc parler*. I criticise sometimes, and I submit always."

"I do just the contrary: I don't criticise, and I don't submit."

"*Ah, mais c'est un mot!* Will you give me leave to tell it to my friend Ladislas? He is writing a society novel; he has read several chapters. It will be delightful. *Nous aurons enfin le grand monde russe peint par lui-même.*"

"What is it going to come out in?"

"In the *Russian Messenger*, of course. It is our *Revue des Deux Mondes*. You read it, I see."

"Yes, but do you know it's getting very heavy?"

"Possibly—possibly. And the *Russian Messenger* too, I take it, is going down hill a bit."

Kallomeïtsef laughed loudly; he thought it very "swell" to use such expressions.

"But it's a periodical that respects itself," he went on, "and that's the main thing. Russian literature, I might as well confess, hardly interests me at all; in the novels of to-day there are only vulgar people. Some one has just chosen for a heroine a cook, a mere cook, 'pon my honor! But as for Ladislas's novel, I shall certainly read it. It will be full of bright things. And then its lesson is such a good one! The nihilists will be dragged through the mire—I'm sure of that from what I know of Ladislas's way of thinking—*qui est très correct*."

"His past life has hardly been so!" remarked Mme. Sipiagin.

"*Ah, jetons un voile sur les erreurs de sa jeunesse!*" cried Kallomeïtsef, completing the operation of removing the glove from his right hand.

Mme. Sipiagin for the second time looked at him coquettishly through her half-closed eyelids. She was a little inclined to flirt with those incomparable eyes of hers.

"Simeon Petrovitch," she said, "tell me, please, why when you speak Russian, you use so many French words? It seems to me (you won't be vexed?) a little old-fashioned."

"Why? Why? It is not everybody who has such perfect command of his native language as—you have, for instance. As for me, I consider Russian the language of ukases and official business; I value its purity very highly! I bow before Karamzin! But is there such a thing as every-day Russian, so to speak? For example, what I just said, '*c'est un mot!*' It's impossible to say that in Russian!"

"I should have said, It's a happy expression."

Kallomeïtsef began to laugh.

"A happy expression! oh! madam! But don't you see that is so pedantic all the sparkle is lost?"

"Well, I am still unconvinced. But what has become of Marianne?"

She rang the bell which was answered by a little page.

"I ordered that Marianne Vikentievna should be asked to come down into the parlor. Was the order forgotten?"

Before the little page had time to answer, there appeared

behind him on the threshold a young girl with her hair cut short, and dressed in a large, dark-colored blouse. It was Marianne Vikentievna Sinetskaïa, a niece of Sipiagin on his mother's side.

VI.

“PLEASE excuse me, Valentine Michailovna,” said the young girl, going toward Mme. Sipiagin; “I was busy, and so got late.”

She then greeted Kallomeïtsef, and was about to take a seat a little to one side on a little hassock, near the parrot, who, as soon as it saw her, began to open its wings and stretch its neck.

“Why do you sit so far off, Marianne?” asked Mme. Sipiagin, whose eyes had followed her all the time. “Do you want to be near your little pet? Only think of it,” she said to Kallomeïtsef, “that parrot is positively in love with our Marianne.”

“That doesn’t surprise me.”

“And it can’t endure me.”

“That *is* surprising. Probably you tease it?”

“No; on the contrary, I give it sugar; only it won’t take it from my hand. No, it’s a matter of sympathy—and of antipathy.”

Marianne looked rather sullenly at Mme. Sipiagin, who also looked at her.

These two women were not fond of each other.

In comparison with her aunt Marianne might well be considered plain. Her face was round, her nose large and aquiline, her gray eyes were also large and very clear, the eyebrows were delicate, and the lips thin. She wore her thick chestnut hair cut short, and her expression was rather unamiable. But she seemed made up of strength, passion, and impetuosity. Her hands and feet were extremely small; her robust and elegant figure recalled the Florentine statuettes of the sixteenth century; her movements were light and graceful.

Miss Sinetskaias’ position in the household of the Sipiagins was a somewhat difficult one. Her father, an active,

intelligent man, of half Polish descent, had reached the grade of general, when suddenly his connection with an enormous robbery of the government was discovered. He was tried and found guilty ; he was dismissed the service, deprived of his patent of nobility, and sent to Siberia. After a time he was pardoned, and he returned to Russia ; but he had not time to climb the ladder again, and he died in extreme poverty. His wife, the sister of Sipiagin, and the mother of Marianne, who was an only child, could not survive the loss of all that made life happy ; she died soon after her husband.

Sipiagin received his niece into his house, but the young girl felt a great disgust for this dependent life ; she longed for liberty with all the energy of an indomitable spirit. Between her and her aunt there was a constant although unavowed struggle. Mme. Sipiagin considered her an atheist and a nihilist, and Marianne detected an inevitable persecutor in Mme. Sipiagin. She held herself aloof from her uncle and from every one ; she avoided men, but not from fear ; her temperament was not a timid one.

"Antipathy," repeated Kallomeïtsef, "yes, it's a singular thing. Every one knows that I am a very religious man, orthodox in the full meaning of the word ; but I can't see a priest's pigtail without being excited ; without boiling over, without boiling over."

In order to express how he would boil over, Kallomeïtsef raised his clenched fist twice.

"Hair in general seems to give you trouble, Simeon Petrovitch," observed Marianne ; "I am sure you can't help being enraged when you see those who wear it short, as I do."

Mme. Sipiagin slowly raised her eyebrows, and shook her head, as if to express her astonishment at the freedom with which young girls nowadays join in a conversation ; but Kallomeïtsef smiled condescendingly.

"Certainly," he said, "I can't help regretting such fine curls as yours, Miss Marianne, when they fall beneath the pitiless blade of the shears ; but that doesn't arouse my antipathy, and at any rate your example might—might apostatize me."

Kallomeïtsef was unable to recall the Russian word, and since he did not wish to speak French after what Mme. Sipiagin had said, he, of course, fell into the most awkward expression available.

"Thank heaven, Marianne doesn't wear spectacles yet," said Mme. Sipiagin, "and she has not as yet given up wearing collars and cuffs; but, on the other hand, to my great regret, she is studying the natural sciences, and is getting interested in the woman question. Are you not, Marianne?"

All this was intended to annoy Marianne, but she was not annoyed.

"Yes, aunt," she replied; "I read everything that's written on the subject. I try to understand what the question is."

"How strange these young people are!" said Mme. Sipiagin to Kallomeïtsef; "you and I, we don't care for such things, eh?"

Kallomeïtsef smiled approvingly. He felt obliged to encourage the lady in her amiable pleasantry.

"Miss Marianne," he began, "is still imbued with that idealism, that youthful, romantic spirit, which—that—with time—"

"Besides, I am doing myself injustice," interrupted Mme. Sipiagin; "these questions interest me, too. Indeed, I'm not yet quite so old as to be wholly indifferent to them."

"And I too am exceedingly interested in all such things," cried Kallomeïtsef hastily, "only I would prohibit them as subjects of conversation."

"You would prohibit them as subjects of conversation," repeated Marianne.

"Yes, I would say to the public, I don't prevent your being interested in these things; but, as for talking about them—hush!" (he placed his finger on his mouth). "At any rate, I should have forbidden anything being printed about them. Absolutely—ab-so-lute-ly!"

Mme. Sipiagin began to laugh.

"What! In your opinion would it not be necessary to name a commission to settle this question?"

"A commission? Why not? Do you think we can't

settle this question as well as those half-starved quill-drivers who can't see further than the end of their nose, and imagine themselves geniuses of the first order? We should have made Boris Andreïtch chairman."

Mme. Sipiagin laughed even more.

"Take care, take care! Sometimes Boris Andreïtch is such a Jacobin—"

"Jaco, Jaco, Jaco," said the parrot.

Mme. Sipiagin waved her handkerchief in order to frighten it.

"Don't interrupt the talk of sensible people. Marianne, play with it."

Marianne turned toward the cage and began to scratch the parrot's neck, which it at once held toward her.

"Yes," resumed Mme. Sipiagin, "sometimes Boris Andreïtch surprises even me. He has in him the making of a—well, of a tribune."

"*C'est parcequ'il est orateur*," said Kallomeïtsef, in French this time. "Your husband has the gift of speech more than any one, and he is accustomed to shine—*ses propres paroles le grisent*—and then his desire of popularity. By the way, isn't he a little vexed just now? *Il boude*, eh?"

Mme. Sipiagin glanced toward Marianne.

"I haven't noticed it," she said after a short pause.

"Yes," Kallomeïtsef went on in a meditative voice, "they did him some injustice at Easter."

Mme. Sipiagin for the second time glanced toward Marianne.

Kallomeïtsef smiled, and shut one eye to show that he understood.

"Miss Marianne," he cried suddenly, rather more loudly than was necessary, "do you intend to give lessons at the school this year?"

Marianne turned her back to the cage.

"Are you interested in that, too, Simeon Petrovitch?"

"Certainly; very much."

"You wouldn't have forbidden that?"

"I should have forbidden the nihilists even thinking of schools, but I should have been the first to establish schools under the care and direction of the clergy."

"Really? I don't know yet what I shall do this year. Last year everything was such a failure! And what sort of a class can one collect in summer?"

Marianne always blushed when she was talking, as if her words cost her an effort, as if she compelled herself to go on. She had a good deal of *amour-propre*.

"Perhaps you are not sufficiently prepared?" asked Mme. Sipiagin with a slight ironical inflection.

"Perhaps."

"What?" cried Kallomeïtsef. "What do I hear? Heavens! Preparation is needed for teaching little peasant girls their a, b, c's!"

But at that moment Kola ran into the room, crying "Mamma, mamma!" He was followed by a lady with a bonnet on her head, and on her shoulders a yellow shawl; she also announced that Borinka was coming.

This lady was an aunt of Sipiagin's, named Anna Zakharovna.

All the persons in the parlor arose in haste and went into the antechamber, thence they went down stairs and out to the front steps. A drive-way lined with trimmed fir-trees led from the high road to these steps, and along this was driving a four-horse carriage. Valentine Michailovna, who was in front, waved her handkerchief. Kola shouted with a piercing voice. The coachman stopped the steaming horses just before the steps, the footman jumped down pell-mell, opened the carriage door so violently that he nearly tore off latch and hinges, and then, with a kindly smile on his lips, in his eyes, over his whole face, throwing off with a single easy and proud gesture the cloak he wore over his shoulders, Boris Andreïtch set foot on the ground.

Valentine Michailovna threw her arms around his neck with a swift, graceful gesture, and each kissed the other's cheeks three times. Kola was skipping about, tugging at his father's coat-tails; but he, having first taken off a horrible Scotch traveling cap, which was as inconvenient as it was ugly, kissed Anna Zakharovna, then bade good-day to Marianne and to Kallomeïtsef, who was also on the steps; he shook the hand vigorously, in the English fashion, of this last-named gentleman, swinging his arm as if he were

ringing a bell—and only then did he turn to his son, whom he took under the arms and lifted to his face.

While all this was going on, Neshdanof had slipped out of the carriage like a criminal, and was standing near the hind wheel without taking off his cap and looking rather sullen. Valentine Michailovna, when she was kissing her husband, had cast a scrutinizing glance over her shoulder at this new face; Sipiagin had sent her word that he would bring a tutor with him.

Then they all, still exchanging polite speeches and shaking his hand, walked toward the staircase with the newly-arrived master of the house. The stairs were lined with the principal servants, male and female. They did not come to kiss their master's hand, that "Asiatic" custom having long since been abolished, they merely bowed respectfully. Sipiagin returned their bows, not so much with his head as with his eyebrows and nose.

Neshdanof also went up the broad steps; as he was entering the anteroom, Sipiagin, who was looking round for him, introduced him to his wife, to Marianne, and to his aunt; then he said to Kola:

"Here is your teacher, I hope you will mind him. Go and shake hands with him."

Kola held out his hand timidly to Neshdanof, looked at him fixedly, but finding nothing extraordinary or attractive about him, he went back to his "papa." Neshdanof felt very much embarrassed. He was wearing an old and tolerably shabby overcoat, as he had done that evening at the theater; the dust of the journey covered his face and hands. Mme. Sipiagin said a pleasant word to him, but he did not hear it very distinctly, and noticed only that she gave her husband bright, caressing glances and hung upon his arm. Kola's oiled and curled hair displeased him; and when he saw Kallomeïtsef he thought, "What a smooth mug he has!" and he paid no attention to the others.

Sipiagin looked on each side twice, as if to recognize his household gods; this movement brought out admirably his long, hanging side-whiskers, and his muscular neck. Then with his full, sonorous voice, which was not at all

affected by the fatigue of the journey, he said to one of the servants :

“Ivan, show this gentleman to the green room and carry his valise there.”

Then he explained to Neshdanof that he could now rest himself, unpack his trunk, and perform his toilet, and that dinner would be ready at five exactly.

Neshdanof bowed and followed Ivan to the green room which was on the second floor. All the others went into the parlor, where they repeated their welcomes : an old, half-blind nurse came to greet the master. Out of respect for her age, Sipiagin held out his hand for her to kiss, and begging Kállomeitsef to excuse him, he went to his own room, followed by his wife.

VII.

THE neat and spacious room to which the servant led Neshdanof, looked out on the garden. The windows were wide open, and a light wind was gently puffing out the white curtains, which swelled like sails, and rose and fell with the air. Bright reflections shone on the floor, the room was full of a smell of spring, fresh and a trifle damp. Neshdanof first dismissed the servant, unpacked his valise, and dressed. The journey had really worn him out,—the continual presence for two days of a stranger with whom he had talked of everything and of nothing; this useless desultory conversation had worn upon his nerves; a bitter feeling, disgust or wrath, was lurking in his heart; he was angry with himself for his lack of courage, his weakness—and the bitterness would not pass off.

He went to the window and looked out into the garden. It was an old garden that had been cultivated a century at least; the soil was rich, its equal was not to be found in the country that side of Moscow. It lay on the slope of a long hill, and was divided into four distinct parts. In front of the house, stretched the flower-garden for a distance of about two hundred paces, with its rectangular gravel walks, its round flower-beds, and clumps of acacia and lilac; to the left, alongside of the stables, as far as the barn, was the fruit-orchard with its compact rows of apple, pear, and plum trees, and of gooseberry and raspberry bushes; further on, in front of the house, the rows of lofty linden trees crossed one another, forming a large square. To the right, the view was cut off by a double row of white poplars which shaded the road; the pointed roof of the orangery arose behind a cluster of beeches.

The whole garden was clothed in the tender green of

opening spring. There was not yet to be heard the mighty and vigorous buzz of insects such as fills the air during the heats of summer ; a few finches were singing here and there ; two turtle-doves were cooing on the branches of the same tree ; a solitary cuckoo was sounding his cry, every time from a different place ; and from afar, from behind the mill-pond came a cawing of crows, loud and continuous, like the creaking of a multitude of wheels on wooden axle-trees. And above all this young, retired, and solitary life, great bright clouds were floating, puffing themselves out like big, idle birds.

Neshdanof stood looking, listening, and breathing in the air which refreshed his half-opened lips. He felt more at ease ; the outside calm had its influence upon him.

Meanwhile, they were talking about him in the room below. Sipiagin was telling his wife how he had made his acquaintance ; what Prince G. had said about him, and the talk they had had during the journey.

"He's an intelligent young fellow," he repeated, "and well educated. He's rather a fanatic in his views to be sure ; but you know that to me that makes no difference ; there is always one good thing about such people, they have self-respect. And then, Kola's too young for such notions to take any hold on him."

Mme. Sipiagin listened to her husband with a smile at the same time caressing and mocking, as if he had confessed to some odd but amusing escapade ; she even felt a sort of pleasure in seeing that her "lord and master," a man of his position and gravity, was still as capable of following a whim as if he were but twenty years old.

Standing before a looking-glass, and adorned with a pair of blue silk braces over his white shirt, Sipiagin was about to brush his hair in the English fashion with two brushes ; and Valentine Michaillovna, who, with her shoes on, was half lying down on a little sofa, was giving him different bits of news about the management of the estate and the paper factory, which, unfortunately, did not succeed as well as it should have done ; about the cook, who would have to be dismissed ; about the church, where the plaster had fallen, about Marianne, and about Kallomeïtsef.

Frank confidence, a sincere friendship, existed between the two; they lived really in "love and unity," as the phrase is; and when Sipiagin, having finished his toilet, asked Valentine Michailovna, like a true knight, for her little hand to kiss, and when his wife held out her hands to him and watched him with proud tenderness kissing first one and then the other, the feeling that their countenances expressed was an honest and kindly one, although with her it shone in eyes worthy of Raphael, and in him in the simple "*lucarnes*" of an official.

At exactly five, Neshdanof came down to dinner, which was announced, not by a bell, but by the prolonged roar of a Chinese gong.

All the people were assembled again in the dining-room. Sipiagin once more, over his white cravat, bade Neshdanof welcome, and gave him a seat at table between Kola and Anna Zakharovna.

Anna Zakharovna was an old maid, the sister of Sipiagin's father; she carried about with her a smell of camphor, like a piece of clothing that has been lying for a long time in a camphor trunk; she seemed gloomy and restless. She filled in the household the place of nurse or governess to Kola, and when Neshdanof was placed between her and her pupil, her wrinkled face expressed discontent. Kola gave sidelong glances at his new neighbor; the bright lad soon guessed that his tutor was embarrassed: indeed Neshdanof did not lift his eyes from his plate, and ate hardly a morsel. Kola was not at all displeased at this; he had always been afraid that his tutor would be a severe, bad-tempered man.

Valentine, too, was observing Neshdanof. "He looks like a student," she thought, "and he doesn't know the ways of the world; but he seems interesting, and his hair is of a rare color, like the apostles whom old Italian masters used to paint red-haired, and his hands are well kept."

Moreover, all the guests were looking at Neshdanof; but they were kind to him and left him alone—at the beginning; and he, who felt that very distinctly, was at the same time pleased and angered, though he did not know why.

It was Kallomeitsef and Sipiagin who kept the conversa-

tion going. They talked about the zemstvo, the governor, the turnpike roads, tickets, their friends at Petersburg, and Moscow, the Lyceum Katkof, which had just been opened, of the difficulty of finding workmen, of ways of punishing them, of the damage caused by wild beasts, of Bismarck, of the war of 1866, and of Napoleon III., whom Kallomeïtsef called a jolly fellow. The young chamberlain professed the most retrograde opinions; he even went so far as to repeat a toast which one of his friends had proposed at a certain quiet supper. "I drink to the only two principles which I recognize," this proprietor, flushed with wine, had cried. "To the knout and to Ræderer!"

Mme. Sipiagin frowned and remarked that this quotation was "*de très mauvais gout*." As for Sipiagin, he expressed the most liberal views; he refuted Kallomeïtsef with a sort of easy politeness in which there was a touch of raillery.

"Your fears on the subject of emancipation, my dear Simeon Petrovitch," he said, among other things, "remind me of a report that the excellent and most respectable Tveritinof handed in to a lofty personage in the year 1860, and which he read aloud in the parlors of St. Petersburg. The finest phrase in this report was that the emancipated peasants would not fail to wander over the face of the whole country, torch in hand. You ought to have seen Tveritinof puff out his little cheeks, open his eyes wide, and cry out from his baby mouth, 'Torch, torch, torch in hand!' Well, the emancipation has taken place—where are the peasants with the torches?"

"Tveritinof," answered Kallomeïtsef gloomily, "was mistaken on only one thing; it's not the peasants, but other people who will carry the torches."

At this moment, Neshdanof, who up to that time had not once looked at Marianne—who was sitting on the same side of the table with himself—exchanged a glance with her, and he immediately felt that both this sullen girl and he had the same convictions, and were striving for the same end. She had in no way struck him when Sipiagin introduced him to her; why was it with her that he happened to exchange a glance? At the same time a pang seized him: was it not a shameful and disgraceful thing for him to sit

there and listen to such remarks and not protest against them, giving them, by his silence, the right to believe that he shared their opinions?

Again his eyes met those of Marianne, and he fancied that he read there an answer to his question, "Wait, the moment has not come—it's not worth while—later; there will always be time enough."

It was pleasant for him to think that she understood him; then he began to listen to the conversation once more. Mme. Sipiagin had succeeded her husband; she went almost further than he did in freedom of opinion, in radicalism. She could not understand, she positively could not understand, how a young, well-educated man could cling to such old-fashioned routine.

"Besides," she added, "I'm sure you say such things only out of mischief. As for you, Alexis Dimitritch," she said, with a pleasant smile to Neshdanof, who was surprised to find that she knew his Christian name, "I know you don't share Simeon Petrovitch's uneasiness; my husband has told me about his talk with you on the journey."

Neshdanof blushed, bent his head over his plate, and stammered a few confused words; not from timidity, but because he was not accustomed to talk with such great people. Mme. Sipiagin continued to smile on him, while her husband expressed his approval by a patronizing nod. Kallomeïtsef slowly raised his round eyeglass to his eye, and began to examine this student who did not share his "uneasiness."

But that did not at all alarm Neshdanof; on the contrary, the young man immediately raised his eyes and met the stare of the haughty official; and the same sudden impression that had made him see in Marianne a friend, showed him in Kallomeïtsef an enemy.

Kallomeïtsef, too, had the same impression; he let his glass fall, turned away, sought for a jest—and found none. Anna Zakharovna alone, who had a secret veneration for him, took his part, and became angrier than ever with the unlucky guest who had separated her from Kola.

The dinner was soon at an end. They went out on the terrace to drink their coffee. Sipiagin and Kallomeïtsef lit

their cigars. Sipiagin offered Neshdanof an imported regalia, but the young man refused it.

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Sipiagin; "I forgot! you don't smoke anything but cigarettes."

"That's a singular taste," muttered Kallomeïtsef between his teeth.

The student nearly burst out at that. He wanted to answer, "I know perfectly well the difference between a regalia and a cigarette, but I don't want to owe anybody anything." But he restrained himself, although not without setting down this new bit of impertinence to the debit side of his enemy's account.

"Marianne," said Mme. Sipiagin suddenly, "don't stand on ceremony; go and smoke your cigarette; especially," she added, turning toward Neshdanof, "especially as I understand that in your set all the young ladies smoke; don't they?"

"You are right, madame," answered Neshdanof dryly. It was the first time he had spoken to Mme. Sipiagin.

"As for me, I don't smoke," she continued, half-closing her velvety eyes with an appealing expression. "I'm behind the times."

Marianne, slowly and methodically, as if out of bravado, chose a cigarette, took a match from the box, and began to smoke. Neshdanof, also, lit a cigarette from hers.

It was a beautiful evening. Kola and Anna Zakharovna went into the garden; the others sat for an hour on the terrace breathing the pure air. The conversation was tolerably animated. Kallomeïtsef made an attack on literature; Sipiagin, always liberal, defended the independence of letters, showed their use, even quoting Chateaubriand, on whom the Emperor Alexander Paulovitch had conferred the order of St. Andrew, the first apostle.

Neshdanof took no part in this discussion. Mme. Sipiagin looked at him, and her expression seemed to say that she approved of this discreet reserve, which yet somewhat surprised her.

When tea was brought in, they all went back to the parlor.

"Dear Mr. Neshdanof," said Sipiagin, "we have here a

bad habit in the evening ; we play cards, and what is more, a game that has been forbidden : stukolka.* Just think of it ! I won't ask you to join us. But Miss Marianne will be kind enough to play on the piano for you a little. You are fond of music, I'm sure, aren't you ?”

And without waiting for a reply he took up the cards. Marianne went to the piano and played neither well nor ill some of Mendelssohn's songs without words.

“ Charming, charming ! What a delicate touch ! ” shouted Kallomeïtsef loudly from the other end of the room.

In fact he had made the remark from mere politeness ; as for Neshdanof, in spite of Sipiagin's confident assertions, he did not care in the least for music. Meanwhile, Sipiagin, his wife, Kallomeïtsef, and Anna Zakharovna, had begun to play. Kola came to say good-night, and having received his parents' blessing, and a great cupful of milk, which was called tea, he went to bed. As he was leaving the room, his father called out to him that he was to begin his lessons with Mr. Neshdanof to-morrow. Soon afterward, seeing that Neshdanof was left there in the middle of the parlor with nothing to do, and that he was pretending to take an interest in a photograph album, he told him not to stand on ceremony, and that he'd better go to his own room and get a good night's sleep, especially as he must be tired after the journey ; besides, liberty was the rule of the house.

Neshdanof availed himself of this permission, bade them all good-night, and left the room. On the threshold he passed Marianne, whom he looked at full in the face ; she not only did not smile, but she even frowned a little, and yet he felt again that she would be a friend and comrade to him.

He found his room full of fragrant freshness ; the windows had been open all day. In the garden, just opposite his windows, a nightingale was uttering short, thrilling notes ; and in the sky, above the rounding tops of the lindens, was an indistinct, ruddy, warm light—it came from the rising moon.

* A sort of lansquenet.

Neshdanof lit a candle ; gray moths, with powdery wings, at once came flocking and whirling in from the dark garden, and the wind that drove them made the blue and yellow flame of the candle flicker.

“What a singular thing,” thought Neshdanof, who was already in bed. “The family and, indeed, every one here seems good, liberal, humane even—and yet I feel very uncomfortable. A chamberlain—a gentleman of the chamber. Bah ! the morning light brings wisdom. Too much sentimentality !”

But at that very moment he heard the repeated blows which the watchman struck upon a sheet of iron ; a voice slowly cried :

“Watch !”

“Watch !” repeated another mournful voice.

“The devil !” said Neshdanof to himself. “One would think we were in a fortress.”

VIII.

NESH DANOF awoke early ; without waiting for a servant to appear, he dressed himself and went out into the garden.

It was a large and pretty garden, kept in admirable order. Some hired laborers were raking the walks ; through the dazzling green of the shrubs one saw, flitting to and fro, the red handkerchiefs which served as head-gear for little peasant girls, who were also armed with rakes.

Neshdanof strolled along to the shores of the pond ; the morning fog had cleared away, but some mist still hung about the shady recesses of the bank. The sun, still low in the sky, threw great rose-colored reflections on the smooth, mirror-like surface of the water.

Five carpenters went and came by the foot-bridge ; a new, freshly-painted boat swayed lightly from side to side on the water, making slight ripples around it. Quiet and subdued voices were heard from time to time ; everything breathed the calm of the morning, the conscientious assiduity of work well begun, the order and regularity of a tranquil and well-established life. And around a turn of the walk Neshdanof saw appear the very personification of order and regularity, Sipiagin himself.

He wore a long green frock-coat—a sort of dressing-gown—and a gayly striped cap ; he leaned as he walked on an English cane ; his freshly-shaven countenance beamed with satisfaction ; he had come out to view his domain.

Sipiagin inquired most affably after Neshdanof's health.

"Ah !" he said, "I see you are young, but matinal." (He used the word *matinal* in its real sense and not in the figurative sense it has in the Russian proverb : "Young

but precocious." He doubtless meant to congratulate Neshdanof on the fact that, like himself—Sipiagin—he was not too much addicted to lying in bed.) "We all drink tea, in the dining-room, at eight o'clock and breakfast at noon; at ten o'clock Kola will take his first lesson in Russian with you, and at two o'clock his history lesson. Tomorrow, the 9th of May, his birthday, he will have no lessons; but I will ask you to begin with him to-day."

Neshdanof assented; Sipiagin took leave of him in the French fashion, waving his hand several times before his face, and continued his way whistling, not like a lofty dignitary, but like a worthy Russian country gentleman.

Neshdanof remained in the garden until eight o'clock, when the sound of a gong recalled him to the house; he found the whole family assembled in the dining-room.

Mme. Sipiagin gave him a most gracious reception; in her morning dress, she seemed to him a perfect beauty. Marianne's face wore the concentrated and almost severe expression which was habitual to it.

Precisely at ten the first lesson began in the presence of Mme. Sipiagin; she first asked Neshdanof if her being present would disturb him. And her demeanor, during the lesson, was as retiring as possible.

Kola proved intelligent, and the first awkwardness and hesitation past, the lesson went on famously. Valentine Michailovna seemed perfectly satisfied with the teacher; she spoke to him several times very kindly. He was guarded in his behavior, but not too much so.

Mme. Sipiagin was also present at the second lesson, that on Russian history. She said, smiling, that she had almost as much need of a teacher as Kola. She behaved with as much discretion as during the morning's lesson.

From three to five o'clock Neshdanof remained in his room to write to Petersburg. He felt very comfortable, and no longer dissatisfied or troubled; his irritated nerves recovered little by little their normal tranquillity. They were racked again, however, during dinner, although Kalomeïtsef was not there and the lady of the house continued to be very gracious to him; but it was just this patronizing air which irritated him. Besides, his neighbor

at table, the old maid Anna Zakharovna, was evidently hostile to him ; Marianne persisted in her seriousness ; Kola, however, with rather excessive familiarity, kicked his legs under the table.

Sipiagin himself seemed to be in a bad humor. He was very much discontented with a German whom he had brought at great expense to manage his paper factory.

Sipiagin railed at all Germans, and declared he was a Slavophil up to a certain point, although not a fanatic on the subject ; he spoke of a young Russian named Solomine, who managed a factory for a neighboring merchant, and managed it extremely well ; he wished very much to make this Solomine's acquaintance.

Toward evening arrived Kallomeïtsef, whose own estate was only ten versts distant from Arjanova, as Sipiagin's place was called. A justice of the peace came too, then another land-owner, one of the kind whom Lermontof characterized so neatly :

“ Buried in his cravat, his coat reaching down to his heels,
Heavily mustached, with a dull look and a falsetto voice.”

Another neighbor then came ; he had a horribly doleful and toothless countenance, but was very neatly dressed. The doctor of the district also came ; he was a poor physician, very fond of scientific terms, who announced, for instance, that he greatly preferred Koakolink* to Pouchkine, because he had so much more “ protoplasm.” They began to play cards. Neshdanof retired to his room, where he read and wrote till after midnight.

On the next day, the 9th of May, was celebrated Kola's birthday, or rather his nameday. The family drove in a body to church in three open barouches, with footmen up behind, although it was not more than three hundred yards from the house. Everything was done very correctly and very superbly. Sipiagin mounted his broad red ribbon. Mme. Sipiagin wore a superb Paris dress of pale lilac, and during the service used a little prayer-book bound in crim-

* A mediocre dramatic poet.—*Tr.*

son velvet ; some of the old peasants were much puzzled by this little book, and one of them could not help whispering to his neighbor :

“ God forgive me, can she be telling her fortune ? ”

The scent of the flowers with which the church was filled, mingled with the stronger emanations from the peasants' smockfrocks just newly cleaned with sulphur and from their freshly tarred boots and shoes ; and above all floated the agreeable but somewhat stifling odor of incense. The sub-deacons and sextons made praiseworthy efforts at choir singing, and, aided by their factory workmen, they even attempted a sort of concert. There was one rather painful moment for their audience, when a tenor voice (which belonged to one of the workmen named Klime, a delicate, consumptive creature) launched out alone without the slightest support, and attempted a series of chromatic and minor scales ; these scales were terrible, but if they had stopped, the whole concert would have fallen through. At last it was over without too many accidents. Then Father Ciprian, a priest of most imposing exterior, dressed in his robes of honor, and wearing his chimney-pot hat, preached a most instructive sermon, which he read from a little paper-covered book ; unfortunately, however, the too conscientious father considered it indispensable to quote the names of some Assyrian kings, the pronunciation of which greatly troubled him, and, if he proved his erudition, he also made himself most uncomfortably warm over them.

Neshdanof, who had not set foot in a church for a long time, took refuge in a corner among the peasants. They scarcely noticed him, they were so busily engaged in crossing themselves, making deep inclinations, and carefully wiping their children's noses ; but the little peasant girls, dressed in new frocks, and with strings of glass beads hung across their foreheads, and the little boys, in loose shirts fastened in at the waist, and with red checked and embroidered suspenders, turned their heads in his direction, and regarded the new-comer with open-mouthed curiosity. Neshdanof also looked at them and thought—of a great many things.

After the mass, which was a long one, for, as every one

knows, the prayer to Nicholas Thaumaturgus is one of the longest in the liturgy, all those present at Sipiagin's invitation directed their steps toward the seignorial mansion, where they went through with some more appropriate ceremonials, sprinkled holy water in all the rooms, and were at last gratified by a bountiful breakfast, during which the conversation was generally edifying but somewhat dull.

The hosts themselves, although it was not their breakfast hour, partook slightly, nevertheless, of the collation, making a pretense at eating and drinking.

Sipiagin even deigned to relate a very proper, but somewhat amusing, anecdote, which, coming as it did from a great dignitary decorated with a red ribbon, produced what might be called a delightful impression. As to Father Ciprian, this anecdote awoke in his heart a sense of grateful admiration.

In his turn, to show that he also was capable of saying something instructive on occasion, Father Ciprian told them about the conversation he had had with the archbishop when, in traveling through his diocese, he had sent for all the district priests to come and see him at the monastery in the town.

"He is a strict man, very strict!" Father Ciprian assured them. "First, he questioned us about our parishes and our revenues, then he put us through an examination. 'What is the dedicatory feast of your church?' he asked me. 'The Transfiguration.' 'And do you know the chant for the day?' 'Certainly.' 'Sing it, then!' I accordingly sang 'Christ, our Lord, was transfigured on the Mountain.' 'Enough! What is the Transfiguration, and how must we interpret it?' I replied, 'Christ wished to show himself in all his glory to his disciples!' 'Very good,' said he; 'here is a little image that I will give you as a souvenir.' I knelt before him, and thanked him so well that he did not let me go away with an empty stomach."

"I have the honor of a personal acquaintance with his eminence," said Sipiagin gravely. "He is a very meritorious priest."

"Very meritorious," Father Ciprian repeated. "But he has a little too much confidence in the deans."

Mme. Sipiagin then spoke of the village school in which Miss Marianne was to teach ; the deacon and school inspector, a man of athletic frame, whose long, waving hair somewhat recalled the well-combed mane of an Orlof stallion, tried to express his approbation of this ; but not having gauged the strength of his lungs, he roared so that he frightened everybody, and was himself ready to sink through the floor with embarrassment. After this the clergy withdrew.

Kola, in his beautiful little jacket with gold buttons, was the hero of the day ; he was overwhelmed with gifts and congratulations, the factory people, the *Dvorovie**—old women, and little girls, came crowding into the back and front staircases to kiss his hand ; the peasants, following the old custom of the time of serfdom, were buzzing confusedly about the tables placed in front of the house, and laden with cakes and bottles of brandy.

Kola, half bashful and half delighted, proud and timid, in turn, was at one moment running about outside, at the next, coming in to kiss his parents. At the end of dinner, Sipiagin had some champagne brought, and before proposing his son's health, made a speech.

He explained in the first place what doing one's "duty here below" consists in, and what course he hoped to see followed by his son Nicholas (for so he called him on this occasion), and what ought to be expected of him in the first place, by his family ; secondly, by society ; thirdly, by the people—yes, gentlemen, the people—and fourthly, by the government !

Warming as he went on, he at last became really eloquent, while thrusting his hand—in imitation of Sir Robert Peel—into the breast of his coat ; he pronounced the word "science" with emotion, and ended his discourse by the exclamation *laboremus*, which he at once translated into Russian.

Kola, glass in hand, went round the table to thank his father, and kiss the company. Neshdanof exchanged glances with Marianne. They probably felt alike in re-

* *Dvorovie*. Servants employed about the mansion-house.

gard to the proceedings. But they did not exchange a word with each other.

This spectacle seemed to Neshdanof amusing and interesting rather than repugnant or disagreeable, and the amiable hostess, Valentine Michhailovna, seemed to him an intelligent woman who knew that she was playing a part, and who was at the same time secretly glad to be understood by some one intelligent and clear-sighted enough to Neshdanof himself did not suspect to what a degree his vanity was flattered by Mme. Sipiagin's demeanor toward him.

The next day the lessons were taken up again and life returned to its old routine.

A week slipped by unnoticed—as to Neshdanof's impressions and thoughts during this time, the best way to give an idea of them will be to quote part of a letter which he wrote to a certain Siline, his old college-chum and his best friend.

This Siline did not live at Petersburg, but in a large and remote city, with a distant relative on whom he was entirely dependent. His position was so irrevocably fixed that the idea of escaping from it never came into his head. He was a delicate young fellow of a timid and not very active mind, but an exceptionably candid soul. He eschewed politics, read a little, played the flute for amusement, and shunned young ladies. He had the warmest affection for Neshdanof ; his heart was very open to affection.

Neshdanof was never absolutely himself except with Vladimir Siline ; when he wrote to him it was as if he were talking with a well-known and sympathetic being, who lived in another world, or with his own inner consciousness. Neshdanof never even thought of how he could get along again with Siline as his chum, or in the same town. If this had happened, he would probably have soon cooled toward him, for their two natures had very few points of contact ; but he wrote to him spontaneously, frankly, and at great length. With other people—in his correspondence, at least—he was somewhat pretentious and affected ; with Siline, never.

Siline, unskillful with his pen, answered Neshdanof's letters seldom, and then in a few short, ill-turned phrases ; but Neshdanof did not feel the need of long answers ; he knew—and this was enough—that his friend absorbed every word of his, as a dusty road absorbs drops of rain ; that he kept his secrets most sacredly, and that, lost in a solitude from which he never escaped, he lived only in the life of his friend. Neshdanof never mentioned to any one this correspondence with Siline, which was more precious to him than anything else in the world.

“ Well, my good friend, my trusty Vladimir ” (for so he always called him in his letters, and not without reason), “ congratulate me ! I've put myself out to grass, and that will give me time to get strong again. I've taken a situation with a rich dignitary, Sipiagin by name ; I teach his cub ; I eat splendidly, I have never eaten so well in my life ! I sleep like a log ; I stroll about at my leisure in a very beautiful country, and, above all, I'm free at last from the tutelage of my friends in Petersburg. At first I was awfully bored, but now I've got the better of that.

“ I shall soon have to take up my knapsack again, in other words, allow myself to be taken up again, since I have given myself out to be a regular mushroom, as the proverb says. It was just for that reason that they let me go ; but meanwhile, I can give myself up to this pleasant animal life. I can enjoy good eating, and even, if the fancy takes me, write verses to you ! As for descriptions of the country hereabouts, you shall have them later ; the estate seems to me in very good order, excepting the factory, which is in very poor trim ; the freed serfs are very hard to get at, and as to the hired servants, they have much too elegant an appearance ! But we will discuss all that by and by. The family are so polite, so liberal ! The master of the house is very condescending ; then, once in a while, he straightens himself up and towers above the rest of us ; he is a very civilized man ! His wife is a beauty and probably a sly puss ; she has a way of watching people—and with all that what softness ! One would say that she had not a bone in her body ! She quite staggers me ; you know what a gallant cavalier I am ! There are some unendurable neigh-

bors and an old woman who persecutes me ; but the person who interests most is a young girl—a relation or companion—I don't know which—with whom I have not exchanged three words, but who seems to be of my stamp."

Then came a description of Marianne's appearance and manners, and then he continued :

"She is proud, unhappy, easily wounded, reserved, but above all, unhappy, there can be no question of that. Why she is unhappy I don't yet know. She has an honest nature, I am sure. Is she good ? that is another question.

"But can women be perfectly good if they are not stupid ? And is it necessary that they should be ? To continue (I know little about women), the mistress of the house does not like her, in fact, there is no love lost between them. But which of the two is in the right I don't know. I'm inclined to believe that the older woman is in the wrong, for she is excessively polite to the girl ; whilst the latter twitches her eyebrows if she merely speaks to her patroness. Yes, she is a very nervous creature, and in that we are alike. She is 'out of her element,' like me, although from a different cause, probably.

"When I find out how matters really stand, I will write to you.

"I have already told you that she scarcely ever speaks to me ; but in the few words that she has addressed to me (always suddenly and unexpectedly), I see a sort of frank friendliness, which is very pleasant to me.

"By the way, how long is that relative of yours going to keep you on dry bread diet ? When will he get out of the way ?

"Did you read an article in the last *Messenger d'Europe*, on the last pretenders to the government of Orenbourg ? That took place in 1834, my dear fellow ! I do not like this review, and the author of the article is a conservative ; but the thing is very interesting, and suggests many reflections."

IX.

MAY was near its close, and the first hot days of summer were beginning. After ending his history lesson, Neshdanof went out into the garden, and went from there into the little grove of birch trees adjoining ; a part of the wood had been cut down fifteen years before, and upon this spot had sprung up a thick undergrowth of young trees. Their stems rose close together and straight, like little silvery columns encircled with gay lines ; their numberless little leaves were of a very bright, vivid green, as if they had been washed and varnished ; the spring grass darted its fine sharp tongues over the even couch of dead leaves with which the past autumn had covered the ground, The copse was all intersected with little paths ; the yellow beaked blackbirds, with shrill cries of fright, flew along these paths almost touching the ground, and hurled themselves headlong into the thicket.

After half an hour's walk Neshdanof seated himself on an old stump, surrounded by heaps of blackened chips, which lay just as they had fallen under the blows of the axe—many times had the snows of winter covered them and then melted away again in the spring, leaving them undisturbed.

Neshdanof sat with his back turned to a close-growing row of young birches whose short but thick shadow extended the length of the clump. He thought of nothing ; he gave himself wholly up to that peculiar feeling which Spring-time brings, and which in the heart of youth or age is mingled with a sort of melancholy—the agitated melancholy of longing expectancy in the youth ; the quiet melancholy of regret in the aged.

Suddenly Neshdanof heard a sound of approaching steps. It was not a man walking alone, nor was it a peasant with his heavy boots or wooden shoes, nor was it a

peasant girl with bare feet. There seemed to be two persons advancing with slow, even steps, and there was the slight rustle of a woman's dress.

Suddenly a hollow voice, a man's voice, was heard saying :
"Then that is your last word ? Never ?"

"Never !" replied a woman's voice which was not unfamiliar to Neshdanof, and, a second after, around a turn in the path which led to the clump of young trees, Marianne appeared accompanied by a man of dark, sallow complexion, with black eyes, whom Neshdanof had never seen before.

At the sight of the young man, they both stopped as if turned to stone, and he was so surprised by their sudden appearance that he even forgot to rise from the tree stump on which he was sitting. Marianne blushed to the roots of her hair and then smiled scornfully.

For whom was this smile intended ; was it because she had blushed, or was it meant for Neshdanof ? Her companion knit his thick eyebrows ; a sudden sparkle came into the yellow whites of his restless eyes. Then he exchanged a look with Marianne and they both slowly and quietly retraced their steps, leaving Neshdanof, who followed them with an astonished gaze.

At the end of half an hour he returned to the house and went up to his room, and when, summoned by the sound of the gong, he entered the drawing-room, he found the same unknown swarthy man whom he had met in the grove ; Sipiagin brought Neshdanof up to the new-comer whom he introduced as his brother-in-law ; the brother of Valentine Michailovna—Serge Michilovitch Markelof.

"I beg you, gentlemen, to make one another's acquaintance, and to like one another, too," exclaimed Sipiagin with the majestically affable and yet absent smile habitual to him.

Markelof made a silent bow which Neshdanof returned ; as for Sipiagin, slightly tossing back his small head and shrugging his shoulders, he went away as if saying, "I have introduced you to each other, and now whether or no you make each other's acquaintance and like each other, is a matter of the most perfect indifference to me."

Valentine Michailovna then came up to the silent cou-

ple, presented the two men to each other over again, and spoke to her brother with that bright caressing look which she so well knew how to throw into her beautiful eyes.

"Well, *cher Serge*, you neglected us shamefully. You did not even come to Kola's *fête*. Are you so very busy? He is trying to establish some new regulations among his peasants," said she to Neshdanof; "such an original idea! he gives them three-quarters of the profits and only keeps one-quarter for himself; and yet he thinks that he keeps too much for himself."

"My sister is fond of joking," said Markelof in his turn; "but I agree with her that to keep for yourself a quarter of what really belongs to a hundred people is taking more than your share."

"Have you observed that I was fond of joking, Alexis Dimitritch?" asked Mme. Sipiagin with the same coquettish softness in her voice and glance.

Neshdanof found nothing to answer, and just at that moment Kallomeïtsef was announced. The mistress of the house stepped forward to greet him, and a few minutes later, a servant appeared and in a solemn voice announced that dinner was ready.

During dinner, Neshdanof could not resist looking, in spite of himself, at Markelof and Marianne, who sat side by side, both with lips contracted and eyes cast down—their expressions somber, severe, and almost angry. Neshdanof asked himself how it could be that Markelof was Mme. Sipiagin's brother—there was so little resemblance between them!

Both, it is true, had dark complexions; but that delicate opaqueness of face, hands, and shoulders which was one of the perfections of Mme. Sipiagin's beauty, was, in her brother, the dark tint which is politely called bronze color, but which is really much more like the hue of undressed leather. Markelof had curly hair, a slightly hooked nose, thick lips, hollow cheeks, a thin body, and nervous hands. His whole frame was dry and nervous. He spoke with a rough, metallic, jerky voice. His eyes were dull and his expression morose. He had, in short, all the characteristics of the bilious temperament.

He ate little, rolled up his bread into pellets, and glanced from time to time at Kallomeïtsef. The latter had just come from the town, where he had been to see the governor on a most unpleasant affair of his own—an affair which he took good care not to mention, although chattering like a magpie.

Sipiagin kept him in check, as usual, when he began to brag too much ; but he laughed heartily at his jokes and stories, while calling him “ a horrible reactionist.”

Kallomeïtsef related, among other things, how he had enjoyed hearing the peasants—“ Yes ! Yes ! ” The simple moujiks called lawyers “ barkers.” “ Barkers,” he repeated gleefully ; “ the Russian people are delicious ! ”

He then told how, during a visit which he paid to a public school, he had asked the scholars what a cameleopard was, and as no one, not even the schoolmaster, could answer his question, he put a second question, “ What is a baboon ? ” At the same time quoting the line from Khemnitsor,

“ The silly baboon, who imitates the other animals.”

and none could answer. “ So you may see how useful public schools are ! ” he concluded.

“ But allow me to remark,” said Mme. Sipiagin, “ that I do not know, myself, what those animals are ! ”

“ Oh ! madame,” cried Kallomeïtsef, “ there is no need for you to know such things ! ”

“ Why then is there any need that the people should know them ? ”

“ Because it would be better for them to know a baboon or cameleopard than a Proudhon or an Adam Smith.”

But here again Sipiagin put down Kallomeïtsef, by declaring that Adam Smith was one of the shining lights of human intelligence, that one ought to suck in the principles he teaches (he poured out a glass of Chateau-yquem, and held it under his nose) with his mother’s milk.

He emptied his glass. Kallomeïtsef did the same, swearing by all that was holy that it was exquisite wine.

Markelof did not pay great attention to the chamberlain’s remarks, but twice he looked at Neshdanof with a

singular expression, and with his fingers snapped a pellet of bread, which came near hitting the orator on the nose.

Sipiagin took little notice of his brother-in-law, nor did Mme. Sipiagin talk with him ; they both evidently considered him an eccentric person who must be let alone and not excited.

After dinner, Markelof went to smoke a pipe in the billiard room, and Neshdanof returned to his chamber. In the hall he nearly ran into Marianne. He tried to pass her, but she stopped him with a gesture.

"Mr. Neshdanof," she said in faltering tones, "I ought not to care what you think of me. I think—I think—" (she paused in search of a word) "I think it best to tell you, that this morning when you saw me in the woods with Mr. Markelof—you wondered, did you not, why we both looked so much disturbed, and why we were there, as if by appointment?"

"To tell you the truth," began Neshdanof, "it did seem to me a little strange that—"

Marianne interrupted him.

"Mr. Markelof," said she, "made me an offer of marriage, and I refused him. That was all I wished to tell you, so now I will bid you good-night. And now you may think what you please of me."

She turned abruptly away and went along the corridor with hasty steps.

Neshdanof entered his chamber and seated himself thoughtfully before the window. "What a strange girl ! Why this extraordinary performance ? Why this uncalled-for frankness ? Was it a desire to be singular, love of talking, or pride ? Probably pride. She could not endure suspicion. She could not bear that any one should form a false opinion of her—a queer girl."

So meditated Neshdanof, and meanwhile they were talking about him out on the terrace. He could hear every word they said.

"My nose tells me," affirmed Kallomeïtsef, "my nose tells me that he is a red republican ! In old times when I was on a special mission with Ladislav, the Governor-General of Moscow, I had to have a great deal to do with such

gentlemen, and also with *raskolniks*,* and I have a first-rate nose for them."

Kallomeitself related, in this connection, how, one day, on the outskirts of Moscow, he had caught by the heel an old raskolink, whom he had pounced down upon unexpectedly with the police, and "who did not quite have time to jump out of the window of the isba—up to that moment he had sat quietly on his bench, the good-for-nothing."

Kallomeitself forgot to add that this same old man, having been taken to prison, had refused all food and starved himself to death.

"As for your new tutor," continued this zealous gentleman, "he is certainly a red republican. Have you not noticed how he never bows first?"

"But why should he bow first?" objected Mme. Sipiagin; "I, on the contrary, think that is very proper in him."

"I am a guest in the house where he works. Yes, yes, where he works for money, like a *hired servant*! Then I am his superior! It is his duty to bow to me first."

"You are exacting, my very good friend," interposed Sipiagin, laying stress on the word "very." "Allow me to say, that all these ideas of yours are much behind the times. I may have bought his services, his work, but he is none the less a free man."

"He does not feel the bit!" resumed Kallomeitself; "these 'reds' are all alike, I can always smell them out. I know no one but Ladislav who can rival me on this point. If this little tutor had fallen into my hands I should have given him a good shaking! Oh! how I would have shaken him! He would soon have sung another tune, and if he had dared wear his hat in my presence—you would soon have seen. It would have been as good as a play!"

"Bragging rascal!" Neshdanof came near shouting from his window.

But at just this moment his door opened, and to his great surprise Markelof entered.

* Raskolink, malcontent, dissenter.

X.

NESH DANOF stood up, and Markelof walked straight up to him and said, without bowing or even smiling :
“ You are really Alexis Dimitrief Neshdanof, student of the University of St. Petersburg ? ”

“ Certainly,” said Neshdanof.

Markelof took from his breast pocket an unsealed letter.

“ In that case, read this. It is from Vassili Nicholaïvitch,” he added, lowering his voice significantly.

Neshdanof opened and read the letter. It was a sort of semi-official circular, in which Serge Markelof was recommended as “ one of us ” and worthy of all confidence ; then followed instructions upon the immediate necessity of a common understanding, and of the propagation of ideas among the people—he knew what sort of ideas. This circular was, besides, addressed to Neshdanof, as a man who was also deserving of the most absolute confidence.

Neshdanof held out his hand to Markelof, offered him a chair, and sat down himself. The visitor, before saying a word, lit a cigarette ; Neshdanof followed his example.

“ Have you had time to enter into relations with the peasants here ? ” asked Markelof at length.

“ No, not yet.”

“ Have you been here long ? ”

“ About a fortnight.”

“ You are kept very busy ? ”

“ Not very.”

Markelof coughed with a displeased look.

“ Hum ! You can’t much depend on the peasants hereabouts,” continued he ; “ they are perfect nonentities. They need teaching. There is great poverty among them, and they have no one to explain to them the causes of their poverty.”

"But as far as one can judge, those who once were your brother-in-law's serfs don't seem to be so very badly off," objected Neshdanof.

"My brother is an expert in the art of throwing dust in people's eyes. The peasants here don't count for anything; but there is a paper mill, and we will concentrate all our efforts there. One blow of the pickax into that ant hill, and you will see how stirred up they will be. Have you any pamphlets with you?"

"Yes, but not many."

"I will get you some. But how thoughtless!"

Neshdanof did not answer; Markelof silently blew smoke through his nose for a few moments.

"What a miserable scoundrel that Kallomeïtsef is," said he suddenly; "during dinner I had a strong desire to go up to the gentleman and slap his insolent, little, ugly face, and give him a lesson. But no! in these times there are more important things to do than thrashing chamberlains. This is not the time to get angry with idiots who use bad words; it is much more important to prevent their doing bad deeds."

Neshdanof nodded assent, and Markelof went on smoking. "Among all the house servants," he began again, "there is only one good fellow; not your Ivan, he is neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring; but a certain Cyril, one of the waiters."

This Cyril was known to be a perfect sot.

"Keep your eye on him. He's a complete drunkard; but we must not be too dainty. And what do you think of my sister?" added he brusquely raising his head and fixing his yellow eyes on Neshdanof; "she is even slyer than my brother-in-law. What do you think of her?"

"I think she is an amiable and very charming woman—and besides she is very pretty."

"Hem! You have such a refined way of saying things, you Petersburg people! I admire you! And what do you think of—"

Here Markelof's face fell, he frowned, and stopped without finishing his sentence.

"I see," he resumed, "that we shall have plenty to talk

about, but not in this room. How the devil can we tell that some one is not listening at the key-hole? Come, to-day is Saturday; to-morrow I suppose you don't give my nephew any lessons, do you?"

"I have a kind of rehearsal of his work with him to-morrow at three o'clock."

"A rehearsal? Why, it's exactly like the theater. My sister must have invented that expression—but no matter. Won't you come at once? My place is only ten versts from here. I have good horses who trot well; you can pass the night at my house, and I will bring you back to-morrow morning before three o'clock; do you agree?"

"As you please," answered Neshdanof.

Since Markelof's arrival Neshdanof had been in a state of over-excitement and disturbance. This unexpected meeting troubled him, although Markelof inspired him with sympathy. He felt, and saw, that this man, doubtless of very narrow views, was certainly honest and strong. Besides, Marianne's unexpected announcement. . . .

"That's right!" cried Markelof. "Get ready and I will go and tell them to put in my horses. I don't suppose you have to ask leave of the master or mistress of the house?"

"I will tell them. It seems to me that I ought not to go away without doing that."

"Don't trouble yourself," replied Markelof; "I'll arrange it all. Just now they are playing cards; they will not notice your absence. My brother-in-law flatters himself that he is a statesman, but the only thing that he does really well is playing cards. After all, many people have made their fortunes in that way. You get ready, and I will see to everything else."

Markelof went off. An hour after, Neshdanof was installed by his side, on a large leather cushion, in a very old, wide, and comfortable tarantass; a microscopic coachman, seated on the end of a plank, whistled unceasingly, so that it sounded like the gentle twittering of birds; the three piebald horses, with braided manes and tails, trotted quickly along on the smooth road; and, in the falling shadows of night (they started just at ten o'clock), they saw glide rap-

idly past them, now in front and now behind, the trees, bushes, fields, ravines, and meadows. Markelof's small estate, which only contained four hundred acres, and brought in an annual revenue of about seven hundred rubles, was named Borzionkovo ; it was situated at about three versts from the town, from which Sipiagin's estate was seven versts distant. To reach Borzionkovo, they were obliged to pass through the town.

The new friends had not had time to exchange fifty words, when they saw before them the wretched little huts of the outskirts of the town, with their half-ruined wooden roofs, and the patches of yellow light in the shattered windows ; then the city pavements clattered beneath the wheels of the tarantass, which began to be hurled from one side of the street to the other ; then they passed jolting by the merchants' stupid houses with elaborate pediments, the churches with their columns, and the inns.

It was Saturday evening ; there were few passing in the street ; but, on the other hand, the taverns were crammed. They could hear hoarse voices, drunken singing, mingling with the nasal sound of an accordion ; when a door opened suddenly there came out a puff of close, hot air, mixed with the harsh odor of brandy and the red glare of the lamps.

Before the doors of most of the taverns the peasants' telugas were standing ; the fat, long-haired horses, with heads hanging down, seemed to be asleep. At times, a peasant, with his shirt and waistcoat open, his belt loosened, on his head a winter cap, of which the top hung down over his back like a bag, would be seen staggering out of the tavern, resting his chest against one of the shafts and standing there still, groping about with his hands, as if seeking for something ; or else it was some puny, feeble factory hand, his cap all awry, his feet bare—his boots being left in pawn at the tavern—who, after staggering a little, would stop, scratch his neck, and, with a sudden exclamation, retrace his steps.

"That's what's killing the Russian peasant—brandy !" said Markelof gloomily.

"It's to drown sorrow, sir !" answered the coachman,

without looking round. As he passed each tavern, he had stopped whistling and seemed to become absorbed in himself.

"Go on, go on!" answered Markelof, tugging energetically at his own collar.

The tarantass crossed the broad market-place, which was filled with the smell of cabbages and of matted linden branches, passed before the governor's house, which was flanked by two black and white striped sentry-boxes; before the police-station with its signal tower; followed the boulevard, in which young trees had just been set out that already were half dead; it passed by the *gostinnoïdvor*,* whence was heard the barking of dogs and the creaking of chains; and, finally, it reached the gate, after passing by a long, very long line of wagons which had started at midnight to enjoy the coolness of the night; soon the tarantass came out into the open air, and began to roll more rapidly and smoothly over the broad, willow-lined highway.

Markelof—for we must tell something about him—was six years older than his sister, Mme. Sipiagin. He had been brought up at the artillery school whence he came out an officer; but he resigned from his lieutenancy on account of a disagreement with his commanding officer, a German. Since that time he had detested the Germans, especially Russian Germans. On account of this resignation he had quarreled with his father whom he had not seen until he was dying; from him he had inherited the little estate on which he lived.

In St. Petersburg he had associated with intelligent men of advanced ideas, who inspired him with a sort of veneration and who had given his mind a decisive impulse. He read but little, and almost exclusively on political subjects, Herzen's works especially. He had preserved his military ways, and lived like a Spartan or a monk. A few years before he had fallen passionately in love with a young girl; but she had jilted him and married an aide-de-camp,—again a German. Markelof now began to detest aides-de-camp also.

* *Gostinnoïdvor*. Russian bazaar; a collection of booths.—*Tr.*

He had tried to write professional articles on the defects of the Russian artillery ; but not having the gift of stating things clearly, he could never bring a single article to a satisfactory conclusion, which, however, did not keep him from blackening vast pages of foolscap with ill-formed, boyish handwriting.

He was an energetic, obstinate man of great courage, who could neither forgive nor forget, who was continually hurt on his own account or that of the oppressed in general, and he was ready for anything.

His narrow mind was centered on a single object; what he did not understand had no existence so far as he was concerned ; but he despised and detested falsehood and lying. With people of the upper classes—the *rēacs*, as he called them—he was rough and even rude ; with the lower classes, simple ; with the peasants, as kindly as a brother.

He was a very moderately successful proprietor. He kept turning over in his mind all sorts of socialist plans that could never come to anything, any more than his articles on the defects of Russian artillery. As a general rule, he never succeeded in anything ; his fellow-officers used to call him “the unlucky.” His character was frank and loyal, his disposition passionate and unhappy ; but at any given moment he could appear pitiless, cruel, deserving to be called a monster ; and at the same time he was capable of sacrificing himself utterly without hesitation and without reward.

Three versts from the town, the tarantass suddenly entered the soft obscurity of a wood of aspens. The rustle of invisible, trembling leaves, the fresh, pungent odor of the still air, the vague glow above, the dark, confused shadows below—it was evidently a wood the travelers were passing through. The moon, red and broad as a brazen shield, had just risen above the horizon.

The tarantass had hardly got out of the shadow of the trees when it stopped before the buildings of a small estate. In the front of a low house, of which the roof hid the moon, three lighted windows stood out in shining squares, the gateway was wide open, and seemed as if it had never been closed.

In the courtyard there could be descried through the darkness a tall *kibitka*, behind which two white post-horses were tied, and two white dogs, which had suddenly sprung up from no one knows where, filled the air with their loud but not angry barking. There was coming and going in the house ; the tarantass stopped before the door, and Markelof feeling with his foot for the steps, which had been placed, as is generally done by domestic blacksmiths, in the most inconvenient spot, got out of the vehicle, saying to Neshdanof,

“We’ve got here ~~at~~ last, and you are going to see some guests whom you know very well, but whom you did not expect to meet. Walk in, please.”

XI.

THESE guests were our old acquaintances Ostrodumof and Mashurina. They were sitting in the meagerly furnished little parlor of Markelof's house, by the light of a kerosene lamp, drinking beer, and smoking.

They were not surprised at Neshdanof's arrival, for they knew that Markelof intended to bring him, but Neshdanof was extremely surprised at seeing them.

When he came in, Ostrodumof said to him merely, "Good-day, brother !"

Mashurina's face suddenly flushed ; she held out her hand without saying a word.

Markelof explained to Neshdanof that their two friends had been sent "for the common undertaking" which was soon to be begun ; that they had left Petersburg a week before ; that Ostrodumof would remain in the government of S—— to get converts, and that Mashurina was going to K—— to have an interview with one of the members.

Markelof grew very much excited, although no one had contradicted him ; with flashing eyes, and continually gnawing at his mustache, he began to speak with evident emotion, in a low but distinct voice, about the infamous things that were going on around them, and on the need of immediate action ; he asserted that in reality everything was ready ; that the slightest delay would be cowardice ; that recourse to force was necessary, like the cut of a lancet when an abscess is ripe. He repeated this comparison of the lancet several times ; it evidently pleased him ; he had not invented it himself, he had read it somewhere. Having no more hope that Marianne would share his feelings, it seemed to him as if they need no longer delay, and he only thought of hastening the moment of beginning the work.

His sentences were short and direct like the blows of an ax, going straight to the point with a sort of wrath. His words fell slowly and monotonously from his pale lips, like the hoarse barking of an old and vigilant watch-dog.

He declared that he knew well the peasants and workmen of the neighboring mills, and that there were good men among them, for instance, Eremei, in the village of Galapliok, who would be ready for anything at any time. He spoke continually about this Eremei of Galapliok. At the end of every sentence he struck the table, not with his palm, but with his fist, at the same time shaking before his face the forefinger of his left hand.

These bony, hairy hands, this pointing finger, this hollow voice, these flashing eyes, made a deep impression. During the drive, Markelof had said hardly a word to Neshdanof; his wrath had accumulated—it was now pouring over. Mashurina and Ostrodumof gave him approving smiles and glances, sometimes they uttered a brief exclamation. As for Neshdanof, a singular phenomenon took place in him. At first, he tried to raise objections; he recalled the inconveniences of haste, the danger to speedy, ill-considered action; he was especially astonished that the decision had been made in that way without any deliberation, without taking account of the circumstances, without even asking exactly what it was that the people desired. But gradually his nerves, which were as tense as wires, began to vibrate quickly, and then with desperate ardor, almost with tears of rage in his eyes, and with a voice broken by cries and sobs, he began to speak to the same effect as Markelof; indeed, he went even further.

What had produced this change? It would be hard to say. Was it shame for his late hesitation, or anger with himself and the others, or the need of overcoming some gnawing restlessness, or the wish of making some manifestation in the presence of the emissaries whom he found there? Or was it really the influence of Markelof's words that had fired his blood?

They talked all through the night; Ostrodumof and Mashurina had not stirred from their seats. Markelof and Neshdanof had not sat down. Markelof remained standing

in the same place, like a sentinel, and Neshdanof was continually walking up and down the room with unequal steps, sometimes slowly, then quickly.

They spoke about the steps they were to take, about the means they should employ, of the division of the duty each one should take in charge ; they selected and put in bundles circulars and pamphlets ; they talked about a certain Goloushkin, a rich merchant, a very trustworthy though uneducated man ; of a young propagandist, Kisliakof, who was to be sure very intelligent, but very hasty and with rather too high an opinion of himself ; they also mentioned Solomine's name.

"Who manages a mill ?" asked Neshdanof, who remembered hearing the name mentioned at Sipiagin's table.

"Yes," answered Markelof ; "you must make his acquaintance. We haven't sounded him yet, but he's a serious, solid man."

Eremeï of Galapliok came up again. They also spoke of a Cyril at Sipiagin's, and of a certain Mendeleïef, called Dontik (the swollen), but they could not count much on him ; when he was sober he was a capital fellow, but he was of no use after he had been drinking, and unfortunately he was pretty full all the time.

"And among your peasants," asked Neshdanof of Markelof, "are there any on whom you can count ?"

Markelof answered that there were, but he mentioned none by name. He plunged into remarks about people who lived in the cities, and the seminarists, who would be of great service on account of their immense physical strength ; when they began to use their fists, then we should see !

Neshdanof asked if they should have the co-operation of any of the nobles. Markelof answered that they would, of five or six, all young—one of them was a German by descent and a radical ; "unfortunately it is well known that no one can have any confidence in Germans. They will betray you and desert you for a song. Besides, we must wait for Kisliakof's reports."

"And the army ? the soldiers ?" asked Neshdanof.

At this Markelof hesitated ; he stroked his long side-whiskers, and at last declared there was nothing decisive, so

far, from that quarter, and besides they must wait for Kisliakof's reports.

"But who is this Kisliakof?" cried Neshdanof impatiently.

Markelof gave a meaning smile.

"He's a man," said he, "a man—but, I must confess, I hardly know him personally, for I've only seen him twice; but what letters he writes! what letters! I'll show them to you. They are wonderful! Such fire! And how energetic he is! He has traveled all through Russia at least five or six times, and from every stopping-place he has sent a letter of from ten to twenty pages."

Neshdanof looked inquiringly toward Ostrodumof, who, however, remained as still as a statue. Mashurina, whose lips were drawn by a bitter smile, did not stir either.

Neshdanof wanted to ask Markelof about the plan of social reorganization which he was trying to establish on his estate, but he was interrupted by Ostrodumof.

"What's the good of talking about that now? In one way or another it will all have to be done over again afterward."

They began to talk politics again. Neshdanof's restlessness continued, and the more he felt the more furious and pitiless were his words.

He had drunk but a single glass of beer, and yet at times he felt as if he were drunk. His head swam; his heart beat with painful slowness. And when at last, toward four in the morning, the discussion having come to an end, they had all separated, taking care not to wake up a little serving-boy who was asleep in the anteroom, Neshdanof, before going to bed, stood motionless with his eyes fastened on the floor. He kept hearing still the bitterness which sounded in all of Markelof's words; evidently this man's pride had been wounded by Marianne's refusal; he could not help suffering from it; his hopes of happiness were crushed, and yet how completely he forgot himself, how heartily he gave himself up to what he believed to be the truth. "He's rather narrow-minded," thought Neshdanof; "but isn't it a hundred times better to be narrow-minded like that than to be—to be, for instance, what I am at this moment?"

Here he had a moment of revolt against this self-depreciation.

"What? Can't I sacrifice myself too? Wait a little, my friends—and you, Pakline, you will see some day that a student of esthetics and a scribbler of verses—"

He tossed his hair back angrily, ground his teeth, and undressing hastily, he flung himself into his cold, damp bed.

"Good-night!" said Mashurina's voice from the other side of the door. "I'm your neighbor."

"Good-night!" answered Neshdanof.

"What does she mean?" he muttered to himself. Then a wave of shame came over him. "Come, come, I must go to sleep."

But his nerves refused to obey him—and the sun was already high in the heavens when he at last fell into a heavy, unrefreshing slumber.

He woke up late in the morning with a bad headache. He dressed himself, looked out of the window of his room, and saw that Markelof had no establishment, properly so called. His little house was an isolated building not far from a grove of trees. To the right a little barn, a stable, a covered cellar, an isba with its roof of thatch half fallen in; on the left, a diminutive pond, a little kitchen garden, a hemp-field, and second isba in as bad a condition as the other; further on an oven for heating grain, a little floor for threshing wheat, and an inclosure for hay-cocks—absolutely empty—such were all the magnificences that lay spread before his eyes. All this poor and meager display did not look as if it had fallen into decay, but as if it had never flourished, like a tree that has never taken root.

Neshdanof went down stairs. Mashurina was in the dining-room, seated before the samovar. She had probably been waiting for him. He learned from her that Ostrodumof had gone off on his mission, and that he would not be back for a fortnight; as for the master of the house, he had gone out to see his workmen. Since May was drawing to an end, and there was not much to do, Markelof had formed the plan of cutting away at his own expense his grove of birches, and he had gone to his work very early. Neshdanof felt very much dejected. They had talked so

much the night before of the impossibility of delay, of the absolute necessity of acting at once—but how were they to act? and immediately!

It would have been useless to ask Mashurina any questions about it; she was not conscious of the hesitation; she knew distinctly what she had to do—it was to go to K——; she did not look further ahead than that.

Neshdanof did not know what to say to her; after he had drunk some tea he put on his cap, and started for the birch grove. On his way thither he met some peasants, former serfs of Markelof's, who had just been manuring the fields; he began to talk with them, but without much profit. They too seemed tired, but with a physical, natural fatigue, very different from what he felt.

Their former master, Markelof, was not, they said, a proud man, only a little strange; they predicted that he would ruin himself, for "he doesn't understand things; he wants to arrange everything in his own way, instead of doing as our fathers did. And he knows too much, too! Do what you please, you can't catch him. Oh, he's a fine man, after all!"

Neshdanof went on his way, and met Markelof himself.

Markelof was walking in the middle of a band of workmen; it was evident from afar that he was talking and trying to explain something, and then he made a gesture, as if to say, "It's no use!" Near him walked his assistant, a near-sighted young man, who was by no means imposing in appearance. He kept repeating continually, "It shall be as you please," to the great disgust of the master, who would have liked to have him suggest something on his own account.

Neshdanof came up to Markelof, and saw on his face the expression of the fatigue he himself felt.

They greeted one another; Markelof began to talk, very briefly, it is true, of the questions discussed the night before, of the imminence of a catastrophe, but his face wore a no less weary look. He was covered with dust and sweat, twigs and moss had caught on his clothes, his voice was hoarse.

The men with him kept silence. It would be hard to

say whether they were afraid of him, or whether they were laughing at him in their sleeves.

Neshdanof looked at Markelof, and those words of Ostredumof's kept sounding in his ears, "What's the good of talking of that now? At any rate, it will all have to be done over again afterward."

One of the workmen who had committed a fault begged Markelof not to punish him. Markelof was vexed by this; he shouted with anger and then let him off.

"At any rate, it will all have to be done over again afterward."

Neshdanof asked Markelof for a carriage and horses to go back with; Markelof seemed very much surprised at this request, but answered that everything would be ready in a few moments. He walked to the house with Neshdanof, limping as he went, like a man tired out.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Neshdanof.

"I'm worn out!" answered Markelof fiercely. "No matter how one talks to these people, there's no way of making them understand, and my orders are never carried out. They don't even understand Russian. They know the word *part*—but *take part*—what does that mean? *take part*. They don't know. But it's good Russian. They think I want to give them some of the land."

Markelof had been trying to explain to the peasants the principles of association, and introduce the principle among them; but the peasants had obstinately refused. After all his explanations, an old peasant had said to him:

"The hole has always been deep, and now it's so deep no one can see the bottom." And all the others had sighed deeply, so that Markelof's patience was exhausted. When he reached the house he dismissed the men, ordered that the carriage be got ready, and breakfast served. His household consisted of a *kazat'hok*,* a cook, a coachman, and an extremely old man with hairy ears, who wore a long calico caftan; he had been his grandfather's *valet-de-chambre*. This old man was always looking at his

* A little groom.

master with an expression of supreme sadness. He had no work to do, and there was nothing, probably, that he could have done ; but he always sat on the edge of the steps, waiting to be called.

After breakfast, which consisted of hard-boiled eggs, sardines, and hashed meat and onions (the kazatchok handed around the mustard in an old pomade pot, and the vinegar in a cologne bottle), Neshdanof got into the tarantass, which had brought him over the evening before, but instead of a *troika* there were only two horses ; the third was lame, he had been hurt in shoeing. During this meal, Markelof sat very silent, eating little, and breathing heavily. He spoke two or three times very bitterly about his estate, and again made the gesture of helplessness and fatigue.

"At any rate, it will all have to be done over again afterward."

Mashurina begged Neshdanof to carry her as far as the town, where she wanted to make some purchases.

"As for getting back," she said, "I shall probably find a place in some telega ; besides, there's nothing to prevent my walking back."

As he accompanied them to the steps, Markelof told Neshdanof that he should go to see him soon, and that then—this idea animated him once more—that then they would make the final arrangements ; he added, that Solomine would come too ; that he himself was only waiting for a word from Vassili Nicholaïvitch, and that then there would be only one thing for them to do, to strike at once, for the patience of the people was exhausted.

The patience of the people, of this same people, who did not understand the words "take part."

"By the way," said Neshdanof, "those letters you were going to show me ? The letters of—what's his name ? Kisliakof ?"

"Some other time, some other time," answered Markelof quickly. "We shall see all that at the same moment."

The tarantass started.

"Be ready," cried Markelof for the last time.

He was standing on the steps, and near him, with his

eternal sadness on his face, with his hands clasped behind him, straightening his bent form, disseminating an odor of rye bread and old calico, and not hearing a word that was said, was the faithful servant, the decrepit *valet de chambre* of his grandfather.

During the drive Mashurina smoked her cigarette in silence. As they approached the town-gate, she suddenly sighed.

"I'm sorry for that poor Markelof," she said, and her face fell.

"Yes," answered Neshdanof; "he takes a good deal of trouble for nothing; he doesn't seem very prosperous."

"Oh! it's not on that account."

"Why is it, then?"

"He is unhappy, he has no luck! Where can you find a better man than he is? And yet—no, no one wants him."

Neshdanof looked at her.

"Have you heard anything?"

"No, I've not heard anything. But every one feels that—by himself. Good-by, Alexis Dimitrivitch."

Mashurina got out of the tarantass, and an hour later Neshdanof drove up at Sipiagin's. He did not feel well. The sleepless night, and then all these discussions and arguments.

A charming face was looking at him from one of the windows, smiling pleasantly. It was Mme. Sipiagin welcoming him back.

"What eyes she has," he thought to himself.

XII.

AFTER dinner, at which there had been a number of people, Neshdanof took advantage of the general indifference to his presence to get out of the way, and escaped to his own room. He felt the need of being alone, were it only to set in order the impressions which he brought back from his visit of the night before.

During the meal Mme. Sipiagin had several times looked at him attentively, without having occasion to speak to him. As to Marianne, since her unexpected action which had so greatly surprised him, she appeared to feel a sort of awkwardness and to be trying to avoid him.

Neshdanof took up a pen. He wished to write to his friend Siline, but he found nothing to say ; he could not succeed in disentangling the multifarious ideas and impressions with which his brain was filled, so he put off writing till the next day.

Kallomeïtsef had been among the guests, and he had never before shown off his disdainful arrogance so well ; but the outrageousness of his discourse had little effect on Neshdanof, who hardly noticed what he said.

The young man felt as if he were in a cloud ; it seemed to him as if there were a thick curtain between himself and the rest of the world ; and, strangely enough, through this curtain only three faces were visible—these, women's faces—who all obstinately fixed their eyes upon him. They were Mme. Sipiagin, Mashurina, and Marianne. What did this mean ? And why these three faces in particular ? What had they in common ? And what were they to him ?

He went to bed early, but could not sleep. There came to him sad thoughts, somber thoughts, black thoughts ; in fact, thoughts of the inevitable end of all things, of approaching death. They gradually became familiar to him ; he turned them over and over in his mind, now shrinking

with secret horror from the thought of eternal annihilation, now accepting it almost with joy.

At length he felt a peculiar emotion which was well known to him. He rose, sat down before his desk, reflected a moment, and then wrote, almost without erasures, the following lines :

“ Dear friend, when I am dying,
These are my last wishes :
Destroy at once
All my useless papers.
Surround me with flowers.
Let the sun into my chamber.
Behind the open door
Place musicians.
Forbid them all sad music !
Let the insolent waltz,
As in the hour of festal gayety,
Give forth its piercing sounds under the violins’ bows,
That, in drinking in with my failing hearing,
The dying sounds of the trembling chords,
I may die like them, I may sink to sleep ;
That, not having disturbed with vain groans
The calm which precedes the end,
I may go away into another world,
Cradled by the light sound
Of light joys here below.”

In writing the word “ friend,” it was of Siline that he thought.

He read over his verses half aloud, and was astonished to see what had fallen from his pen.

This skepticism, this indifference, this light unbelief, how did this agree with his principles, with what he had said to Markelof ?

He threw the note-book into the drawer of his desk, and went back to bed ; but he did not go to sleep until morning, when the ringing song of the larks sounded like little bells in the whitening sky.

The next day when he had finished giving his lesson and had just sat down in the billiard-room, Mme. Sipia-gin entered, looked about her, and approaching him with a smile invited him to step into her boudoir.

She wore a light barege dress, which was very simple

and very pretty ; the ruffled sleeves only reached to the elbow, a broad ribbon sash encircled her waist, her hair fell in thick plaits on her neck. Everything about her, from the softened luster of her half-shut eyes, and the careless languor of her voice, to her very step and movements, breathed forth a gracious welcome and a caress—a circumspect and encouraging caress.

Mme. Sipiagin led the way to her boudoir. It was a convenient and agreeable room, filled with the scent of flowers and delicate perfumes, the fresh neatness of woman's dress and the constant presence of woman. She made him sit down in her easy-chair, sat down near him herself, and began to ask him about his trip, about Markelof's manner of life, and all in such a subdued, gentle, sweet way ! She showed such a sincere interest in everything concerning her brother, of whom until now she had never spoken in Markelof's presence ! Some of her words allowed him to guess that the feeling inspired by Marianne had not escaped her attention ; she seemed somewhat saddened at it. Was this because the feeling had not been shared by Marianne, or because her brother's choice had fallen upon a young girl who was, in reality, a stranger to her ? This point remained obscure. But above all things she was really trying to tame Neshdanof, to inspire him with confidence, to oblige him to drop his reserve ; Mme. Sipiagin seemed even troubled that he did not wholly understand her.

Neshdanof listened to her, looked at her hands, her shoulders, threw from time to time a glance at her rosy lips, at the curls of her hair, which gently stirred when she spoke. Neshdanof's replies were at first very brief ; he felt an oppression on his chest and a lump in his throat.

Little by little this feeling was exchanged for another, also disturbing, but not without charm ; he never could have imagined that so distinguished and so pretty a woman—an aristocrat—could feel any interest in him, a poor devil of a student ; and not only was Mme. Sipiagin interested in him, but she was even a little coquettish !

"Why is she thus ?" he asked himself, but could find no answer to the question.

In truth he did not wish to find one.

Mme. Sipiagin spoke of Kola ; she even began by telling Neshdanof that if she had sought an interview with him it was with the sole intention of ascertaining his views on the education of children in Russia.

The sudden fashion in which this wish had come to her might well appear somewhat strange. In fact, it was quite another motive ! The truth is, the real solution of the enigma was that a vague touch of passion inspired her with a wish to subjugate, to bend at her feet that haughty head.

But we must go back a little.

Valentine Michailovna was the daughter of a very ordinary and obscure general who had only obtained one star and a clasp* at the end of fifty years of service, and of a very artful and crafty woman from Little Russia, who had the simple, almost silly air so common to her country women, and who made great use of it.

Mme. Sipiagin's parents were not rich ; but she was nevertheless educated at the convent of Smolna, where her application and her exemplary conduct won for her the good graces of her superiors, although she was looked upon as a republican.

On leaving her convent (her brother was by that time in possession of their small domain, the general having died), she installed herself and her mother in a suite of rooms, neatly furnished, but so cold that people's breath froze while they were speaking.

Valentine used to say, smilingly, that it was like a church.

She bore courageously all the sufferings of this narrow and poverty-stricken existence, thanks to her marvelous equability of disposition.

With her mother's aid, she succeeded in making and keeping quite a number of acquaintances ; every one, even in the highest circles, spoke of her as a very well educated young girl and very *comme il faut*.

* A clasp worn on the breast in which is inscribed in Roman figures the number of years a man has served in the army, counting from twenty-five upwards.

Aspirants to her hand were not wanting ; she chose Sipiagin among them all and made him in love with her in an instant—in addition to which he felt from the first that she would make the kind of wife he ought to have. She was intelligent, not bad—rather good—cold and indifferent at heart, although she would not allow other people to remain indifferent toward her.

Valentine possessed that particular sort of dangerous and tranquil grace which is peculiar to “lovable” egotists ; that grace in which there is neither poetry nor real feeling, but which expresses kindness, sympathy, and even a sort of tenderness ; only these charming egotists do not like to be contradicted. They are despotic, and cannot bear independence in others. Such women as Mme. Sipiagin agitate and stir up *naïve* and passionate people ; while for their own part they prefer a calm and regular life to all else ; virtue is easy to them, nothing moves them ; but their constant desire to rule, to attract, and to please, gives them mobility and brilliancy ; they have a strong will in which in great measure their power consists. When one of these serene and impassible creatures seems suddenly to wake up and become electric with involuntary and hidden languor, how is it possible to resist ? One says to oneself that the ice is going to melt ; but the shining ice likes too well to play with and reflect back the sunbeams ; it will never melt, and never be broken.

Mme. Sipiagin could well risk a little coquetry ; she knew well that there was and could be no danger for her. But to darken or brighten the eyes of another ; to call upon another's cheek the flush of desire or fear ; to force another's voice to tremble or break ; to trouble the soul of another ; oh ! how she enjoyed it with all her heart ! And at night when she stretched herself upon her white bed to taste peaceful slumbers, what a pleasure there was in recalling words full of emotion, suppliant looks, anxious sighs ! When she deigned to receive the legitimate caresses of that polished husband of hers, what a satisfied smile played around her lips as she meditated upon her own inaccessibility to emotion. These thoughts were so agreeable to her that sometimes she felt really softened by them,

and ready to perform some good action, to come to the aid of another.

Once a secretary of legation, who was madly in love with her, having cut his throat, she founded a little hospital in his honor. She had prayed sincerely for this young man, although her religious sense had always been weak from childhood upward.

Well, she talked with Neshdanof, trying by all the means at her command to bring him to her feet ; she made herself accessible, she unveiled herself, figuratively speaking, before him, and she watched with an amiable curiosity, with a quasi-maternal tenderness, how this pretty youth, this shy and interesting radical came toward her with slow and awkward steps. A day, an hour, a minute, and all this will have disappeared without leaving any trace ; but in the meantime, she felt pleasure mixed with a desire to laugh, a little alarm, and even a slight degree of melancholy. Forgetting Neshdanof's birth, and knowing how people who are alone in the world are pleased by questions of the sort, she asked him about his childhood, about his family. But she soon perceived, by the brief and embarrassed answers of the young man, that she had taken a wrong tack, and laid herself out to make up for her mistake, just as a full-blooming rose in the penetrating warmth of the summer noon spreads even wider her perfumed petals, which the strengthening freshness of the night shall draw together and fold up again.

She did not wholly succeed, however, in repairing her blunder. Touched to the quick, Neshdanof could not feel as easy as before. The bitterness which he always had within him, which he always felt in the depths of his heart, came to the surface ; his democratic rancor and suspicion were awakened.

"Did I come here for this ?" thought he.

He remembered Pakline's mocking remarks—and taking advantage of the first pause in the conversation, he rose, bowed, and left the room "*bêtement*," as he said to himself.

His embarrassment did not escape Mme. Sipiagin's notice. But to judge by the smile with which she accom-

panied his departure, she interpreted the embarrassment to her own advantage.

On entering the billiard-room, Neshdanof met Marianne. Her arms were closely folded, and she was standing with her back to the window not far from the door of the *boudoir*. Her face was in a heavy shadow, but her fearless eyes looked at the young man with such a persistent interrogation, her closed lips expressed such disdain, such imperious pity, that he stopped irresolutely.

"You have something to say to me?" asked he.

Marianne waited a moment before answering:

"No—well, yes; but not now."

"When?"

"We will see. Perhaps to-morrow, perhaps never. After all I don't feel quite sure what you are."

"It seemed to me nevertheless," began Neshdanof, "that between us—"

"And as for you, you do not know me at all," interrupted Marianne. "But wait, to-morrow perhaps. Just now I must go to my mistress. To-morrow."

Neshdanof started to go, then suddenly came back.

"By the way, Marianne Vikentievna, I have long wished to ask permission to go to the school with you some time, to see what you do there, before it is closed."

"Very well, but it was not of the school I meant to speak to you."

"Of what then?"

"I will tell you to-morrow," repeated Marianne.

But she did not wait till the next day. The conversation she wished to have with Neshdanof took place that very evening, in one of the linden walks which led off not far from the terrace.

XIII.

SHE came up to him.

"Mr. Neshdanof," she began hurriedly, "you are, I believe, completely fascinated by Mme. Sipiagin."

She turned without awaiting his answer, and walked down the path; Neshdanof joined her and walked along by her side.

"What makes you think that?" he asked after a moment's delay.

"Can I be mistaken? In that case she must have taken the wrong means for once. I can just see how she has maneuvered, how she has reached out her little tentacles!"

Neshdanof, without answering a word, looked covertly at his strange companion.

"Listen," she continued. "I will speak frankly to you. I don't like Mme. Sipiagin; for that matter you have already perceived that fact. Possibly I seem to you unjust, but wait before judging—"

Her voice failed. She blushed and was embarrassed. With her, embarrassment always took the form of anger.

"You are doubtless wondering why this young lady, whom you scarcely know, says all this to you. You probably thought the same thing when I told you that about Mr. Markelof."

She suddenly stooped, picked a little mushroom, broke it in two, and threw it to a distance.

"You are mistaken, Miss Marianne," said Neshdanof. "I thought, on the contrary, that I inspired you with confidence, and that greatly pleased me."

Marianne glanced rapidly toward him. Until then she had kept her head constantly turned away from him.

"It is not so much that you have inspired me with confidence, but your position in life so nearly resembles my

own. We are equally unfortunate, that is the link between us."

"You are unhappy?" asked Neshdanof.

"And you, are not you unhappy too?" replied Marianne. He kept silent.

"Do you know my history?" said she impetuously.

"My father's history, his exile?"

"No."

"Well, then, let me tell you that he was tried and found guilty, that he lost his rank, and everything, and that he was exiled to Siberia. In short, he died. My mother also died. My uncle, Mr. Sipiagin, my mother's brother, took me in. I live at his expense; he is my benefactor. Valentine Michailovna is my benefactress, and I reward them with the blackest ingratitude, probably because I have a hard heart, and because the bread of others is bitter, and I do not know how to bear the humiliation of a false indulgence, and I cannot endure being patronized, and do not know how to escape it, and because, when I am perpetually pricked with a pin, if I do not cry out, it is only because I am proud."

Speaking in this way, in disconnected sentences, Marianne walked quicker and quicker.

Suddenly she stopped.

"Do you know that my aunt, merely to get rid of me, wishes me to marry that horrid Kallomeïtsef? She knows my convictions, moreover. In her eyes I am a nihilist, and in his! Naturally I don't please him, as I'm not beautiful! but they can sell me, and this will be one more obligation!"

"Then, why," began Neshdanof, "have you not—"

He stopped.

Marianne glanced at him.

"Why did I not accept Mr. Markelof, you were going to say, weren't you? Yes, but how can I? He is a worthy man. But it is not my fault, I cannot love him."

Marianne again hastened her steps, as if to spare her companion the necessity of replying to this unexpected avowal.

They had reached the end of the path.

Marianne quickly turned into a narrow path which led through a thick firwood, and walked down it. Neshdanof followed her. He felt a double perplexity ; it seemed very extraordinary to him that this gloomy young girl spoke to him so frankly, and what still further astonished him was that this frankness did not surprise him, but seemed to him very natural.

Suddenly Marianne turned and stopped in the middle of the path, so that her face was close to Neshdanof's. She fixed her eyes on those of the young man.

"Alexis Dimitritch," said she, "don't think that my aunt is wicked. No ; she is only a living lie ; she is an actress, she poses ; she wishes to be adored by every one, for her beauty, and to be at the same time venerated as if she were a saint ! She invents a good phrase—very sincere—coming from her heart even ; says it to one person, then repeats it to a second, a third, and always as if it had that moment occurred to her, and then she uses her magnificent eyes to some purpose ! She knows very well that she resembles the Dresden Madonna, and she does not absolutely love any one. She pretends to be always occupied with Kola, and what she really does for him is to talk about him with bright people. She does not wish any one ill, she is all kindness ! But if you were torn limb from limb in her presence it would be all the same to her ! She would not stir a finger to serve you, and if your harm is her good—then, oh ! then !"

Marianne was silent, stifled with suppressed wrath ; she had resolved to let it have free course, she could not contain herself, and her words rushed forth in spite of herself. Marianne belonged to a very unhappy class of persons often to be met with in the Russia of the present day. Justice satisfies them without making them happy ; and injustice, to which they are terribly susceptible, disturbs them to the bottom of their souls. While she spoke, Neshdanof looked at her attentively ; her flushed face, with her short hair slightly disordered, and the tremulousness of her finely curved lips, looked menacing, portentous, and handsome, superbly handsome. A ray of sun striking through the network of closely intertwined branches, struck upon her forehead

with a bright mark, and this tongue of fire accorded with the excited expression of her whole face, with her brilliant eyes which were fixed and opened wide, and with the vibration of her voice.

"Tell me," said Neshdanof, at length, "why did you call me unfortunate? Do you know my past?"

Marianne nodded, "Yes!"

"But—what do you know? They have told you about me?"

"I know—your birth."

"You know—who told you?"

"Who but she! She as usual! This Mme. Sipiagin with whom you are so delighted! She did not fail to say before me, in covert phrases, but very clearly, not compassionately, yet with the air of a liberal person who is above all prejudice, what were the peculiar circumstances of this new tutor's life. Don't be surprised, I beg you. Mme. Sipiagin tells every new-comer, with compassion this time, what are her niece's peculiar circumstances, how her father was exiled to Siberia for speculation. She thinks she is a great lady, but she is only a gossip and an actress, your Raphael Madonna."

"Pardon me! why *my* 'Madonna'?"

Marianne turned away, and began to walk along the path again.

"You had such a long talk together!" she said at length, with a hollow voice.

"I hardly said a word," replied Neshdanof; "it was she who did all the talking."

Marianne continued to walk on, keeping silent. But at a place where the path turned aside, fir trees seemed to open out before them, a little clearing appeared, in the center of which rose a weeping willow, whose old cracked trunk was surrounded by a circular bench.

Marianne sat down on this bench, Neshdanof took his place by her side. The long, drooping branches, covered with young green leaves, slowly swayed above their heads. Around them in the short grass grew white lilies-of-the-valley, and in all the clearing the short grass exhaled a perfume which gave a pleasant sensation to their lungs, already somewhat oppressed by the resinous smell of the firs.

"You wished to see our school?" said Marianne; "so be it; come. Only I do not think you will be much edified by it. You know, the deacon has charge of the school. A worthy man, by the way; but you can't imagine how queer his teaching is! Among the scholars there is one named Gaross, an orphan, nine years old; he is the best scholar in the school."

One would have said that Marianne, in suddenly changing the subject of their conversation, was herself transformed into another creature; she grew pale and calm, and her face expressed a sort of confusion as if she was ashamed of what she had said. She had a visible desire to lead Neshdanof off on to any question whatever—about the school or the peasants—anything—so that she led him away from their former subject of discourse.

But, just at this moment, no question could interest him.

"Marianne Vikentievna," said he, "frankly, I little expected all that—has taken place between us." (At the words "taken place," Marianne made a slight movement.) "It seems to me we have suddenly come nearer to each other. But that had to come. For some time we have been walking toward each other, without yet exchanging bows. It is for that reason that I speak to you so openly. Your sojourn in this house is hard and painful to you; but your uncle, although a narrow-minded man, seems to me a man of good feeling, as far as I can judge; doesn't your uncle understand your position? Doesn't he take your part?"

"My uncle? In the first place, he's not a man; he's a public functionary, senator, minister—I don't know what! Then, besides—I don't wish to complain foolishly and calumniate people; life here is neither hard nor painful to me. I am not oppressed; my aunt's little pin-pricks are really nothing in my eyes—I'm perfectly free."

Neshdanof looked at Marianne with stupefaction.

"In that case—all that you have told me—"

"Laugh at me as much as you please," interrupted she; "but, if I'm unhappy, it's not because of my own misfortunes. It seems to me at moments, that I suffer for all the oppressed—the disinherited people, in Russia; or, rather,

I don't suffer, I get indignant, for them. I revolt ; I am ready to give my life for them. I'm unhappy at being a young woman, a dependant, and able to do nothing, nothing—and capable of nothing. When my father was in Siberia, and I lived at Moscow with my mother, I wanted to go and find him ! Not that I had any great affection or respect for him, but I had a great desire to go and see with my own eyes, feel in my own person, how exiled and persecuted people live—and how irritated I was with myself and with all calm, plump, self-satisfied people ! And then, when my father returned broken-down, worn-out, when we had to humiliate ourselves, to solicit help, to seek the good graces of those in power ; ah ! how painful and miserable it all was ! How right he was to die ! And my mother, too ! As for me, I remained in this world ! To do what ? I feel that I have a bad disposition ; that I am ungrateful ; that I am of no use to any one ! ”

Marianne turned aside, and her hand slipped down on to the bench beside her. Neshdanof was filled with pity for her ; he wished to take this neglected hand, but Marianne quickly withdrew it ; not because Neshdanof's movement seemed to her impertinent, but because she did not wish to seem to beg for sympathy from any one.

A woman's dress was seen in the distance through the fir woods.

Marianne straightened herself.

“ See ! ” she said, “ your madame has sent her spy ; that chambermaid was charged to watch me and tell her where I am, and with whom ! My aunt probably thought I was with you, and she doesn't think that proper—particularly after the sentimental scene she gave you the benefit of. Besides, it's really time to go back to the house ; so come.”

Marianne arose ; Neshdanof did the same. She looked at him over her shoulder, and suddenly an almost childlike expression came over her face, a look gracious and somewhat embarrassed.

“ You're not angry with me, are you ? You will not think that I too have treated you to a scene ? No, you won't think that,” continued she before Neshdanof had time to reply. “ Are you not unhappy likewise ? Isn't

your temper bad like mine ? To-morrow we will visit the school together like good friends, as we are now."

When Marianne and Neshdanof reached the house, Mme. Sipiagin looked at them through her eyeglass, and shook her head with the kindly little smile habitual to her ; then, going through the long window which stood open into the drawing-room, where Mr. Sipiagin was playing "Preference" with the toothless neighbor, she said, weighing every syllable :

"How damp it is outside ! It is very unhealthy."

Marianne and Neshdanof exchanged glances. Sipiagin, who had just beaten his adversary, threw toward his wife a side-glance—a real ministerial look ; then this same sleepily cold look he cast upon the young couple who had just come in from the already dark garden.

XIV.

A FORTNIGHT had passed by. Everything was going on in its usual routine. Sipiagin arranged each day's work—like a minister, or at least like the director of a department. He always kept up his air of affable but somewhat bored superiority. Kola took his lessons. Anna Zakharovna seemed possessed by a blind rage which she dared not show. Visitors came, talked, and played cards without seeming to get tired of it. Valentine Michailovna continued to amuse herself with Neshdanof, although a touch of gentle irony was mingled with her amiability.

Neshdanof had become quite intimate with Marianne, and at last, to his great surprise, he made out that she had quite an even temper, and that one might talk to her about all sorts of things without meeting too sharp contradictions.

He went twice to visit the school with her, but the first visit showed him it was time wasted. The deacon was absolutely master in the school by Sipiagin's express wish.

This deacon taught reading and writing—tolerably well on the whole, although he employed an almost obsolete method—but at the examinations he asked very curious questions. Thus, one day, he had asked Gaross :

“How do you explain the passage of the Bible : The dark waters in the clouds ?”

To which Gaross, as he had been taught by the deacon himself, was to say, “The passage cannot be explained.”

Moreover, the school was about to be closed—on account of the midsummer work—until autumn.

Neshdanof, remembering Pakline's advice, and that of his other friends, tried to scrape acquaintance with the peasants ; but he soon saw that he was contenting himself with studying them from the point of view of an observer, and that he was not preaching the new doctrine to them.

He was only accustomed to the city, having passed the greater part of his life at Petersburg, so that between him and the peasants there was an abyss which, with all his efforts, he could not cross.

He had had occasion to exchange a few words with the drunkard Cyril, and even with Mendelei Doutik ; but, singularly enough, he felt shy before them, and he had never been able to draw from them anything more than two or three violent but vague oaths.

Another moujik, named Fituïef, simply filled him with amazement. This peasant had an extraordinarily energetic face, a real brigand's head.

"There, this is the sort of fellow we want," thought Neshdanof. Now it happened that this Fituïef was a man without hearth or roof, from whom the commune had taken back his land, because he could not work.

"I can't," he sobbed, with his hollow, querulous voice, and with deep sighs. "I can't work. Kill me if you want to ! I would go hang myself rather than work."

He ended by turning beggar—by asking for one little kopek to buy a little crust of bread. And he had this bloodthirsty face withal, worthy of Rinaldo Rinaldini.

Neshdanof had no better luck with the mill-hands ; some were terribly indifferent, others terribly reserved. He could do absolutely nothing with them. He thereupon wrote his friend Siline a long letter, in which he complained of his incompetence, ascribing it to his faulty education and his wretched esthetic tendencies.

He then imagined that his true occupation in the work should consist, not in speaking, but in writing. But that was no more successful. Everything which he put down on paper seemed artificial and theatrical, false in expression and language ; and twice, to his horror, he strayed into writing verse or into purely personal skeptical reveries.

He decided—and it was a great mark of confidence and intimacy—to speak to Marianne about his ill success ; and again, to his great surprise, he found in her sympathy, not for his writings, that of course, but for the moral malady from which he was suffering, and which was not wholly

unknown to her. Marianne, like himself, was an avowed enemy of esthetics, and yet, by a contradiction which she did not dare analyze, it was just this lack of esthetic tastes in Markelof which had kept her from loving him. But only that is strong within us which remains even for ourselves a but half-suspected secret.

The days passed thus, slowly, unevenly, but without being wearisome.

Neshdanof was in a singular state of mind. He was dissatisfied with himself, with what he did, or, rather, what he did not do ; his words almost always betrayed the bitterness of his self-reproaches, and yet, in the bottom of his heart, in its most secret corners, he felt a certain comfort, something that seemed really consoling. Whence could it come ? From the calm of the country ? From the air, the summer, the good cheer, the agreeable life ? Was it perhaps because for the first time of his life he was enjoying the pleasure one gets from the sympathy of a woman's soul ? Whatever it was, in spite of the perfectly sincere complaints he wrote to Siline, he did not wish to change.

Besides, Neshdanof's mind was about to receive a most violent and unexpected shock in a single day.

One fine morning he received a letter from the mysterious Vassili Nicolaïvitch, in which the order was given that he and Markelof, while waiting for further instructions, should immediately make the acquaintance of Solomine, and come to an understanding with him, as well as with a certain merchant, an Old Believer, living in S——.

This letter pained Neshdanof very much. He read between the lines a direct reproach to his inactivity. The bitterness which had only appeared in his words now filled his whole being.

At dinner time Kallomeïtsef came in great wrath and excitement.

"Only think," he cried, almost breaking down, "what a horrible thing I've just read in the paper ! My friend, my good Michael, Prince of Servia, has been assassinated by some wretches at Belgrade. Where will these Jacobins, these revolutionists stop, if they are not held by a hand of iron ?"

Sipiagin "begged leave to remark" that this abominable murder was not committed by Jacobins, "whose existence in Belgrade was exceedingly problematical;" but by people of the party of Kara-Gheorgi, who were enemies of the Obrenovitch.

But Kallomeïtsef would not listen to a word; he went on in the same lachrymose voice to say what a friend the prince had been to him, and what a magnificent gun he had given him. As he went on, his own words excited him, and from foreign Jacobins he turned to the Nihilists and Socialists at home, against whom he launched his thunderbolts. He took a bit of bread in his two hands, and breaking it over his soup, as is done by the *habitués* of the Café Riche, he expressed a desire to break, crush, and grind to powder those who were in opposition "to anything or anybody." That was his own expression.

"Now is the time," he cried, carrying his spoon to his mouth. "Now is the time," he repeated, holding his glass to the waiter who was pouring out the sherry.

He spoke with veneration of the prominent writers of Moscow, and "Ladislav, our dear, good Ladislav," was continually on his lips.

During his whole speech he intentionally kept his eyes fastened on Neshdanof, as if to say, "There, that's for you! and you can take that slap! and that! and that!"

The young student finally lost his temper, and in a rather hoarse, it is true, and somewhat tremulous voice (not tremulous from fear, however), he began to defend the hopes, the principles, and the aims of the younger generation.

Kallomeïtsef began at once to whine (when he was angry he always spoke in a falsetto voice), and he became rude.

¶ Sipiagin majestically defended the young man; Valentine Michailovna followed her husband's example; Anna Zakharovna tried to distract Kola's attention, and cast angry glances on all sides from underneath the floating ribbons of her cap; Marianne did not stir, but sat there as if she were turned to stone.

But suddenly, when he heard Ladislav's name mentioned for the twentieth time, Neshdanof flew into a passion, and striking the table with the palm of his hand, he said:

"He's an excellent authority ! As if we didn't know all about this Mr. Ladislas. A hired assassin, nothing else !"

"Eh, what, what ?" shouted Kallomeïtsef, stammering with rage. "You dare talk in that way about a man who is very highly thought of by such persons as Count Blasenkrampf and Prince Kovrijkine ?"

Neshdanof shrugged his shoulders.

"A capital recommendation ; Prince Kovrijkine, that enthusiastic flunkey—"

"Ladislas is my friend," cried Kallomeïtsef. "He's my comrade, and I—"

"So much the worse for you," interrupted Neshdanof. "That means that you share his views of things, and my words can apply to you as well as to him."

Kallomeïtsef turned very pale.

"Why ? what ? you dare ? You deserve instantly—"

"What is it, sir, that I deserve instantly ?" interrupted Neshdanof again, with ironical politeness.

Heaven alone knows how this clapperclawing of the two enemies would have ended, if Mr. Sipiagin had not hastily put a stop to it. He raised his voice, and threw himself into an attitude in which it would have been hard to say whether it was the gravity of a statesman, or the dignity of the master of the house that predominated, and declared with calm firmness that he did not care to hear any longer at his table such improper expressions ; that for a long time he had made it a rule—an inviolable rule, he said, correcting himself—to respect every one's convictions ; but on the express condition that (here he raised his forefinger, which was adorned with a seal ring) they should be kept within the limits of dignity and propriety ; that if, on the one hand, he could not help blaming in Mr. Neshdanof a certain extravagance of language, on the other hand, he could not approve the warmth of Mr. Kallomeïtsef's attacks on the persons in the opposite camp, a warmth, he might add, which was to be explained by his zeal for the public welfare.

"Under my roof," he concluded, "under the roof of the Sipiagins, there are neither Jacobins nor assassins ; there are only honorable people, who, after they fully understand one another, are ready to shake hands."

Neshdanof and Kallomeïtsef both kept silence, but they did not shake hands ; evidently the time for understanding one another had not come. Far from it ; they had never detested one another so intensely.

The meal was finished in painful silence. Sipiagin tried to repeat a diplomatic anecdote, but he broke down half-way.

Marianne kept her eyes on her plate. She did not wish to betray the sympathy which was aroused in her by Neshdanof's words. She was not at all afraid, but she felt it necessary to be on her guard before Mme. Sipiagin, who, she felt, was watching her closely.

The fact is, that Mme. Sipiagin was continually looking at Marianne and Neshdanof. The young student's sudden outburst had at first astonished her ; then she had a sort of revelation, a sudden flash of light, which had made her exclaim involuntarily, "Ah !" All at once Mme. Sipiagin had understood that Neshdanof was breaking loose from her ; Neshdanof, who, not long before, seemed ready to come at her call. What had happened ? Could Marianne—Yes, no doubt—he pleased her—and she—"

"I shall have to see to that," thought Mme. Sipiagin, concluding her reflections.

Meanwhile Kallomeïtsef was bursting with rage. Two hours later, in playing "Preference," he kept saying "Pass," or "I take it up," with an imbittered heart ; and although he tried to seem above everything of that sort, his voice was tremulous from the unavenged insult.

Sipiagin alone was positively enchanted with this scene. He had had an opportunity to air his eloquence, to calm the rising storm—Sipiagin knew Latin, and the *Quos ego* of Virgil was familiar to him.* He did not compare himself in so many words to Neptune, but just at that moment the memory of that god was not displeasing to him.

* "*Quos ego—! Sed motos præstat componere flectus,
Post mihi non simili pœna commissa luetis*"—

Neptune's address to the troubled sea in the first book of the *Æneid*.

XV.

AT the first convenient opportunity, Neshdanof withdrew and went to the solitude of his own room. He did not want to see any one, any one except Marianne.

The young girl's chamber was at the end of a long corridor which divided the whole upper floor. Neshdanof had never been in her room except once for a few minutes, as he was passing by ; but it seemed to him as if that evening she might not be angry if he were to knock at her door, and even as if she might be glad to talk with him.

It was tolerably late, about ten o'clock. The master and mistress of the house, since the scene at dinner, had paid no more attention to Neshdanof, and were playing cards with Kallomeïtsef. Mme. Sipiagin had twice asked for Marianne, who had also disappeared after dinner.

"Where can Marianne Vikentievna be ?" she had twice exclaimed, first in Russian, and then in French, without addressing any one in particular, but staring at the walls, as people do who are surprised, after which she had at once gone on with the game.

Neshdanof walked up and down his room for some time, then he went along the hall to Marianne's door and knocked gently. There was no answer. He knocked a second time, and tried to open it. The door was locked, but he had hardly time to return to his own room and sit down, before his own door creaked slightly, and he heard Marianne's voice :

"Alexis Dimitritch, was it you who knocked at my door ?"

He sprang to his feet and rushed to the hall.

Marianne was standing pale and motionless at the door, with a candle in her hand.

"It was I—yes," he murmured.

"Come," she answered.

She went along the hall ; but before reaching the end,

she stopped before a low door which she pushed open. Neshdanof saw a little, almost empty, room.

"Let's come in here, Alexis Dimitritch; we shan't be disturbed."

Neshdanof obeyed. Marianne set her candle down in a window-seat and turned toward him.

"I know why you wanted to see me," she said; "you find life in this house hard. So do I."

"Yes, I wanted to see you, Marianne Vikentievna," answered Neshdanof; "but my life is no longer hard since I have learned to know you."

Marianne smiled thoughtfully.

"Thank you, Alexis Dimitritch; but tell me, do you mean to stay here after all this bad treatment?"

"I think I shan't stay, because they'll send me off," answered Neshdanof.

"But wouldn't you refuse to stay?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Do you want to know the real reason? Because *you* are here."

Marianne bowed her head and withdrew a little toward the back of the room.

"And then," Neshdanof went on, "I am *obliged* to remain here. You don't know, but I will tell you everything. I feel it is my duty to speak out frankly."

He approached Marianne, and took her hand; she did not withdraw it.

"Listen!" he cried with a sudden and violent transport; "listen to me!"

And at once, without taking the trouble to sit down on one of the two or three chairs which composed the furniture of the room, standing before Marianne and still holding her hand, Neshdanof, with a fire, an excitement, and eloquence which carried him on, told the young girl about his plans, resolutions, and the cause which had induced him to accept Sipiagin's propositions; he spoke of his relatives, his past, of all his secrets which he never told any one, of the letters he had received, of Vassili Nicholaïvitch, of everything, even of Siline.

He spoke rapidly, without interruption, without hesitation, as if he reproached himself for having delayed so long confiding his secrets to Marianne, as if he wanted to justify himself before her.

She listened with eager attention. Her first impression had been one of profound astonishment. But this feeling disappeared almost instantly ; gratitude, devotion, firm resolution, filled her soul. Her face, her eyes, grew bright. She placed her hand that was free on Neshdanof's ; her lips opened with an expression of enthusiasm. She had suddenly become wonderfully handsome.

He stopped at last, looked at her, and it seemed to him that he saw for the first time this face which was at the same time so dear and so familiar to him.

He breathed slowly, deeply.

"Ah, I've done right to tell you everything !" he murmured with some effort.

"Yes, you have done right—you have done right," she said in a low voice ; involuntarily she had begun to imitate Neshdanof ; and then she caught her breath.

"You know, don't you, that I am at your disposal ; that I want, too, to be useful to your cause ; that I'm ready to do whatever is necessary, to go wherever I'm ordered ; that I have always, and with my whole soul, wanted what you want ?"

She, too, was silent. Another word, and tears of sympathy would have rolled from her eyes. Her strong nature had suddenly become as soft as wax. A thirst for action, for self-sacrifice, for immediate self-sacrifice, was now consuming her.

At that moment, light, furtive, quick steps were heard on the other side of the door.

Marianne straightened herself, and freed her hands. She had changed completely ; she had become almost gay. But now a disdainful and bold look flashed over her face.

"I know who's playing the spy upon us, now," she said so loudly, that every one of her words echoed in the hall. "It's Mme. Sipiagin who's eavesdropping. But it makes no difference to me."

The sound of steps ceased.

"Well," said Marianne to Neshdanof, "what am I to do? How can I be of use to you? Speak, speak quickly; what am I to do?"

"I don't know yet," answered Neshdanof. "I have received a letter from Markelof."

"When? When was that?"

"This evening. I must go with him to-morrow to Solomine's mill."

"Yes, yes. What an excellent man Markelof is! What a true friend!"

"Like me?"

Marianne looked Neshdanof straight in the face.

"No; not like you."

"How then?"

She turned away.

"Ah, you don't know yet what you have become to me, and what I am feeling at this moment."

Neshdanof's heart began to beat swiftly and strongly; involuntarily he cast down his eyes. This young girl who loved him, him, a homeless vagabond, who intrusted herself to him, and was ready to follow him, to march with him toward one and the same end; this fearless young girl, Marianne, became in a moment for Neshdanof the embodiment of all that is good and generous on earth; the embodiment of the feminine, paternal, family friendship that he had never known—the embodiment of country, happiness, effort, and liberty.

He raised his head, and he saw Marianne's eyes again fastened on his. Oh! how that clear, frank look sank to the bottom of his soul!

"So then," he resumed with an uncertain voice, "I go away to-morrow. And when I come back, I will tell you" (he found it hard now to say *you*), "I'll tell you what I've heard—what has been decided. Starting from to-day, whatever I shall do or think, I shall tell to *thee*."

"Oh, my friend!" cried Marianne, seizing his hand again, "I shall do the same with thee."

This *thee* had come as easily and simply as one might use it to a comrade.*

* But for greater naturalness, this form will not be kept up in the translation.

"Can I see the letter?"

"Yes; here it is."

Marianne ran it over, and raised her eyes to Neshdanof with a sort of veneration.

"And do they intrust such an important mission to you?"

He answered by a smile, and returned the letter to his pocket.

"It's strange," he said then; "we have convinced one another of our love, and yet not a word of love has been uttered between us."

"Where was the need?" murmured Marianne; and suddenly she flung herself on to his neck, resting her head on his shoulder.

They did not exchange a kiss, that would have been vulgar, and at the same time terrible; such at least was their feeling about it, and they separated at once, after a hearty pressure of the hand.

Marianne took up the candle which she had placed in the window-seat of this empty room, and only then did she have a feeling of amazement. She blew out the candle, glided through the hall in the thick darkness, reached her room, undressed, and went to bed—still in the darkness, which seemed to her, at that moment, a pleasant and a friendly shield.

XVI.

WHEN he woke up the next morning, Neshdanof felt no regret at recalling what had taken place the evening before ; on the contrary, he was filled with a calm and peaceful joy, as if he had accomplished something which had been hanging over his head for a long time.

After having asked Sipiagin for two days' leave of absence, which was granted him without hesitation, although somewhat coldly, Neshdanof started for Markelof's.

Before going he had had time to see Marianne. She was no longer confused or embarrassed ; she looked at him calmly and spoke to him quite as calmly. She was only uneasy about what he might hear at Markelof's, and she besought him to tell her everything.

"Certainly I shall," answered Neshdanof.

"In fact," he thought, "why should we be disturbed ? In our relations to one another personal feeling has played a subordinate part, and we have united ourselves forever, in the name of the work. Yes, in the name of the work."

So Neshdanof thought, and he by no means suspected how much truth and falsehood there was in this belief.

He found Markelof in the same state of mind, angry and tired. After they had dined meagerly, they started off in the tarantass, which has already been described (Markelof's leader was still lame ; its place had been taken by a peasant's colt, hired for the journey, which had never been in harness before), for the merchant Faleïef's large cotton mill, of which Solomine was the superintendent. Neshdanof's curiosity was very much excited ; he felt very anxious to make the acquaintance of this man, of whom he had for a long time heard so much.

Solomine was expecting them ; as soon as the two

strangers arrived before the door and had sent in their names, they were introduced into the wretched little house where the superintendent lived. He was at that moment in the main building ; while one of the workmen went to announce his visitors, they had time to go to the window and look about.

The mill was evidently very prosperous and overrun with work ; on all sides arose a hoarse roar, the clatter of incessant activity ; the engines puffed and rattled ; the looms buzzed, the wheels whirled, the leather straps hummed ; from all quarters, carts, casks, and telegas were being filled ; cries, orders, the snapping of whips filled the air. Workmen with their shirts bound around their waists, and their hair fastened by a little strap, workmen in faded calico gowns, were hastily crossing the courtyard, while horses in carts were walking slowly and heavily by. Might like that of a thousand human beings could be felt vibrating, palpitating, and beating about them. It was moving smoothly, without interruption, with full strength.

Not only was there no elegance anywhere, nor even any attempt at it, but the simplest cleanliness was lacking ; indeed, everywhere was carelessness, filth, mud, and old soot ; here was a broken window, there some fallen mortar, elsewhere some tumbling planks in a wall ; a yawning doorway, the door having lost its hinges ; a great black pool, its stagnant surface glistening with decay, filled the middle of the principal courtyard, near some heaps of loose bricks. Bits of matting, of wrappings, of boxes, rope-ends, lay on the damp ground ; shaggy, hungry-looking dogs were roaming about, without even barking ; a little boy about four years old, with a prominent belly, his hair in disorder, covered with soot, was sitting in a corner, leaning against a fence, and crying as if the whole world had forsaken him ; close by him, and covered with the same soot, surrounded by her motley-colored sucklings, a sow was eating some stumps of cabbages ; ragged clothes were hanging along a line. And what a stench ! what vile exhalations ! A real Russian mill, not an English or French factory.

Neshdanof turned toward Markelof.

“ I’ve heard so much said,” he began, “ about Solomine’s

exceptional qualifications, that I confess all this disorder surprises me ; it's not what I expected."

"It's not disorder," answered Markelof with some warmth. "It's Russian dirtiness. Yet there are millions invested here ! Solomine is obliged to consider his employer's old habits, and enterprise, and character. Have you any notion what sort of a man Faleïef is ?"

"None at all."

"He's the biggest skin-flint in Moscow. He's not a gentleman."

At that moment Solomine came in. This was another disenchantment for Neshdanof. At the first glance Solomine looked to him like a Finn, or rather, like a Swede.

He was tall ; a very light-complexioned man, thin and strong ; his face was long and sallow, his nose short with broad nostrils ; he had little green eyes, a calm and confident expression, strong, somewhat prominent lips, large white teeth, a square chin, just covered with a light down.

He wore the dress of a workman, of a fireman—an old jacket with yawning pockets, an oil-silk cap full of creases, tarred boots, and a woolen scarf about his neck.

There came in with him a man about forty years old who looked like a gipsy, as much by the extreme mobility of his face, as by his bright black eyes, which quickly swept over Neshdanof. He already knew Markelof. He was named Paul, and was a sort of a factotum of Solomine's.

Solomine went up to his two visitors without saying a word, shook their hands with his own hard hand, took out from a drawer a sealed packet, and without saying a word gave it to Paul, who at once disappeared. Then he stretched himself, cleared his throat, threw off his cap with a wave of his hand, sat down on a painted wooden stool, and pointing to a bench of the same kind, he said to the visitors :

"Sit down, please."

Markelof first introduced Neshdanof to Solomine ; he grasped the new-comer's hand for the second time.

Then Markelof began to talk about the "work," and about Vassili Nicholaïvitch's letter. Neshdanof handed the

letter to Solomine. While he was reading it, going from one line to another attentively and without haste, Neshdanof looked at him.

Solomine was sitting near the window ; the sun, already low, lit clearly his sun-burned face on which lay a few drops of perspiration, and his light hair, covered with dust, on which were shining a crowd of little golden points. Solomine's nostrils dilated slightly during the reading, and he moved his lips as if he were pronouncing every word ; he held the letter firmly in both hands directly in front of his eyes. All this, heaven knows why, made a favorable impression on Neshdanof.

Solomine gave the letter back to the young man, smiled, and began to listen again to Markelof, who had been talking for some time. When he had finished,

"See here," said Solomine, in a somewhat husky, but young and strong voice, which also pleased Neshdanof, "this is not a very convenient place for talking ; let us go to your house, it's only seven versts. You came in a tarantass, didn't you ?"

"Yes."

"Good ! there will be room enough. My work will be over in an hour, and I shall be free. We will talk. You are free too ?" he asked Neshdanof.

"Until day after to-morrow."

"Very well ; we'll pass the night there. You are agreed, Serge Michaelovitch ?"

"What a question ! of course."

"Very well ; I shall be ready very soon, only let me spruce myself up a little."

"And how are matters in the factory ?" asked Markelof meaningly.

Solomine averted his eyes.

"We'll talk about that," he repeated. "Wait ; I'll be back in a moment. I've forgotten something."

He went out. Had it not been for the good impression he had made on Neshdanof, the young student would probably have thought and perhaps said, "Isn't he good stuff ?" but it didn't occur to him that there was any need of this question.

An hour later, while every floor was discharging a noisy crowd of workmen, down the staircases, through all the doors, a tarantass, in which were seated Markelof, Neshdanof, and Solomine turned through the main gateway into the high road.

"Vassili Fedoitch!" shouted Paul to Solomine, whom he had accompanied to the gate. "Shall we begin?"

"Wait a little while," answered Solomine. "It's about some business," he explained to his companions.

They reached Borzionkovo, and went through the form of eating a supper; and after lighting their cigars, they began one of those interminable all-night talks, familiar to Russians, but unknown to any other people.

Once more Solomine surprised Neshdanof. He spoke remarkably little, so little that one might say he did not speak at all; but he listened with unrelaxing attention, and when he said anything it was to the point and very brief.

It turned out that Solomine did not believe that a revolution was impending in Russia; but not wishing to force his opinion on the others, he let them say their say, and listened to them, not coldly and distantly, but sympathetically. He knew well the revolutionists of Petersburg, and, up to a certain point, he sympathized with them, for he was one of the people; but he also took into account the inevitable indifference of the people, without whom, nevertheless, nothing could take place, and the long preparation they needed, but of another sort and toward a wholly different end. That is why he kept aloof, not like a crafty man who is hedging, but like a sensible man who does not care to throw away uselessly himself or any one else. As to listening to them, why should he not? and he might learn something.

Solomine was the only son of a church chorister; he had five sisters, all married to priests and deacons; but, with the consent of his father, who was a sober, serious man, he had left the seminary and devoted himself to studying mathematics, and mechanics especially, for which he had taken a great fancy. An Englishman, the superintendent of a mill into which he had entered, and who had grown to love him as a son, had given him the means to ge

to Manchester, and stay two years there, learning English. Having recently entered the Moscow merchant's mill, he was stern with his subordinates, because he had seen that was the way in England ; and yet they were attached to him.

"He's one of us," they said.

His father was very proud of him, calling him a "punctual man," and only regretting one thing, that he did not get married.

During this conversation, Solomine, as we have said, was almost continually silent ; but when Markelof began to talk of the hopes he had of the mill-hands, Solomine, with his usual brevity, pointed out that workmen in Russia were the mildest class possible, and totally unlike the workmen of other countries.

"And the moujiks ?" asked Markelof.

"The moujiks ? There are a certain number of monopolists among them, and there will be more every year ; but they only know one thing, their own interests ; as to the others, they are sheep—and what dense ignorance !"

"But where shall we turn ?"

Solomine smiled.

"Seek and you shall find."

He smiled almost all the time, and his smile, like everything about him, was natural and thoughtful. He was particularly gentle to Neshdanof ; the young student aroused in him a feeling of sympathy, almost of tenderness.

There was a moment when Neshdanof suddenly flushed crimson from excitement ; Solomine rose slowly, crossed the room with measured steps, and closed a window that was open over Neshdanof's head. "You mustn't catch cold," he said kindly, as if in answer to his look of surprise.

Neshdanof then asked what socialist ideas he intended to introduce in the mill of which he had charge, and if he intended to divide the profits among the workmen.

"My poor fellow," answered Solomine, "the owner kicked like a mule against letting us merely found a school, and a little bit of a hospital."

Only once did Solomine get really angry ; he struck his sturdy fist so hard on the table before him that he made everything jump, including a forty-pound weight which stood by the side of the inkstand ; it was about an unjust judgment, and the persecutions inflicted on an *artel** of workmen.

When Neshdanof and Markelof began to talk about the measures to be taken in order to put their plans into action, Solomine continued to listen with curiosity, even with respect, but he did not say another word.

They sat up till four in the morning, and what was there that they did not talk about ? Markelof spoke, among other things, of the indefatigable traveler, Kisliakof ; of his letters, which were always growing in interest ; he promised Neshdanof that he would show him some, and even lend him some to read at home, they were so long, and the hand-writing was somewhat hard to read, and especially because they contained so much. They contained even verses, not trivial or frivolous poetry, but poetry with social aims.

From Kisliakof, Markelof branched off to soldiers, aides-de-camp, Germans in the Russian service, and even to his articles on artillery. Neshdanof spoke of the antagonism between Heine and Børne, of Proudhon, and realism in art.

As for Solomine, he listened attentively, smoking his cigar and smiling constantly ; but, without saying one striking word, he yet seemed to understand the truth better than the others.

Four o'clock struck—Neshdanof and Markelof were so tired they could hardly stand, but Solomine was still fresh. They separated after agreeing to go next morning to the town, to see the merchant Goloushchine—the Old Believer—and get converts. Goloushchine was full of enthusiasm, and he had promised proselytes ! Solomine began by expressing a doubt :

“Was it really worth while to go see Goloushchine ?” Then he ended by saying, “Why not ?”

* *Artel*. A society of young men of the same trade, a rudimentary co-operation society, such as has long existed in Russia.

XVII.

MARKELOF'S guests were still sleeping when he received by express a letter from his sister, Mme. Sipiagin.

Valentine spoke in her note of some insignificant matters, begged him to send back to her a book which she had lent him, and apropos of nothing, told him in the postscript an amusing bit of news, which was that his old love, Marianne, had fallen violently in love with the new tutor, Neshdanof, and he with her; and this was not a bit of gossip which she was repeating, but an actual fact, for she had seen with her own eyes, and heard with her own ears.

Markelof's face became as black as night—but he did not speak a single word; he gave the book to the messenger, and meeting Neshdanof, who was coming down stairs, he wished him good day as usual; he even gave him the packet of Kisliakof's letters which he had promised him; but he did not stay with him, he went out to "superintend the work."

Neshdanof went back to his chamber, and ran through the letters. In them, the young propagandist spoke constantly of himself, of his feverish activity: to use his own expressions he had, during the last month, rolled over the highways of eleven districts, visited nine towns, twenty-nine villages, fifty-three hamlets, a farm, and eight factories; he had passed sixteen nights in barns, one in a stable, and one even in a cow-barn (here he remarked in a parenthesis, with a *nota bene*, that fleas never bit him); he had made his way into the workmen's cabins, and into the barracks of the railway navvies; everywhere he had instructed and indoctrinated, everywhere he had distributed pamphlets and collected information while on the wing; sometimes writing it down on the spot, and sometimes committing it to mem-

ory by the most approved system of modern mnemonics, he had written fourteen long letters, twenty-eight short ones, eighteen notes (of which four were in pencil, one in blood, one in soot and water); and the reason he found it possible to do so many things was, that he understood how to distribute his time systematically, according to the precepts of Quentin, Johnson, Sverlitsky, Carelius, and other statisticians and publicists.

Then he began speaking of himself again, of how he had completed Fourier's theory of "passional attraction;" he had been the first he said to find the true "Soil," and "he would not pass from the earth and leave no trace;" he was even surprised that he, a young fellow of twenty-two, should have already solved all the problems of life and of science. He wound up by declaring that he would transform Russia; that he would shake it like a plum-tree; that he would turn it inside out like a glove.

"*Dixi!*" he added. This *dixi* often recurred in Kisliakof's letters, and always accompanied by an exclamation point.

One of the letters contained a socialistic poem, addressed to a young girl, beginning with these words:

"Love not me, but the idea!"

Neshdanof was surprised, not so much at the conceit of Mr. Kisliakof, as at Markelof's naïve indulgence of him. But having reflected he said to himself:

"Bah! Kisliakof will be useful in his way; down with esthetics!"

The three friends met again in the dining-room at breakfast; but the discussion of the night before was not resumed; no one felt like talking. But Solomine alone was tranquil; the silence of the two others revealed their secret agitation.

After breakfast they started for the town; and Markelof's old servant, seated upon the steps, followed his master with the sad and mournful look which was habitual to him.

Goloushchine, the merchant, whose acquaintance Neshdanof was to make, was the son of an Old Believer, who had made a fortune by selling drugs. Goloushchine had not increased the fortune left him by his father, for he was a high

liver, as they say, a Russian epicurean, and he had none of the qualities necessary to commerce.

He was a man of about forty, rather stout, and very ugly—his face pitted by small-pox, and with small pig's eyes; he spoke with volubility, mixing up his words, and continually jerking his arms and legs, with expressions of forced laughter. On the whole he looked like a big spoiled child, rather silly and vain withal.

He considered himself a man of culture because he dressed in the German fashion, kept open house, and had to do with rich people; he went to the theater and formed intrigues with the actresses, to whom he talked in a ridiculous jargon which pretended to be French.

His ruling passion was desire of popularity; he would have liked to have the name of Goloushchine resounding through the whole universe, and that people should talk of Kapiton Goloushchine as they talk of Suwarrow or Potemkin. This passion, which had overcome his innate avarice, had, as he used to say with pride, thrown him into the opposition, or "position," as he at first pronounced it, until he was corrected. He had ended by becoming a Nihilist; he professed the most extreme opinions, ridiculed his own sect, feasted on fast days, played cards, and drank champagne like water. His opinions had never brought him into trouble, because, he used to say, "all the authorities have been bought by me for ready money, all the joints are stopped up, all mouths closed, all ears sealed."

He was a widower, and childless; his sister's sons pursued him with a sort of servile terror; but he treated them like uneducated clodhoppers and barbarians, and hardly permitted them to show themselves before him.

He lived in a handsome stone house, which was very ill-kept; certain rooms were furnished in the European fashion, while others contained absolutely nothing but some little chairs and a sofa covered with oilcloth. There were pictures everywhere, real daubs, red landscapes, violet sea-pieces, Moller's "*Le Baiser*," great naked women with red knees and elbows.

Although Goloushchine had no family properly so-called, his house was overrun with lackeys and parasites whom he

supported, not from generosity, but on account of the insatiable thirst for popularity which possessed him, and also in order to have people whom he could order round and play the great man to.

"My clients," he used to say with pride. He never read a word, but he never forgot learned expressions.

The three young people found Goloushchine in his library. He was wrapped in a big coat, with a cigar in his mouth, pretending to read the paper. When he saw them, he sprang up; went first to the right, then to the left, blushed, ordered that some luncheon be brought at once, asked a question, burst out laughing about something else—and all this at once!

He knew two of the young men; Neshdanof was the only stranger. When he heard he was a student, Goloushchine burst out laughing for the second time, squeezed his hand again, and said:

"Bravo! bravo! a capital recruit! Science is light; ignorance is darkness! For my part, I never had a penny's worth of instruction in my life; but I understand things because I go straight to the core."

Neshdanof thought he saw that Goloushchine was embarrassed and timid. He was right. At the sight of every new face, Goloushchine used to say to himself:

"Take care, Kapiton, don't fall with your nose in the mire."

He soon recovered himself, and in his stammering, confused, and hasty way, he began to talk about the mysterious Vassili Nicholaïvitch, of his character, of the need of the pro-pa-gan-da (he knew this word very well, but he always pronounced it slowly), of a new and very serious convert whom he had discovered himself, he, Goloushchine; the moment, he went on, had nearly come; all was ready for the—for the stroke of the lancet (when he said this he looked at Markelof, who did not move even his eyebrows); then turning to Neshdanof he began to boast about himself, so that he could have given points to Kisliakof, the great correspondent.

At that moment a servant brought in luncheon. Goloushchine coughed significantly, invited his guests to "make a

hole in it," and by way of example swallowed a glass of peppered brandy. The others began to eat their luncheon. Goloushchine crammed great lumps of pressed caviare into his mouth, and drank in due proportion.

"Come, gentlemen," he said, "I want you to taste this Mâcon."

Then, turning to Neshdanof, he asked him where he came from, where he lived, if he was there for long; and when he heard that he lived with the Sipiagins, he cried:

"I know that gentleman, he's an empty-headed fellow."

And thereupon he fell upon all the proprietors of the government of S—, declaring that they lacked not only all the qualities of citizens, but also the knowledge of their own interests.

But, oddly enough, while he was talking in this energetic way, a certain restlessness could be detected in his eyes, which were turning in every direction. Neshdanof could not make out very clearly what this man could be, nor how he could be useful to them. Solomine, according to his habit, remained silent, and Markelof looked so gloomy that Neshdanof asked him at last what was the matter. To which Markelof answered, "Nothing," in the tone one uses to imply that one has really something to say, but prefers not to say it.

Goloushchine soon began again his criticisms, then he suddenly turned to eulogizing the young generation. "What intelligent fellows they are! oh, what capital fellows!"

Solomine interrupted him to ask of what young people he was speaking, and where he had met them.

Goloushchine burst out laughing as was his custom, and said:

"Oh, you'll see, you'll see!"

Then he asked Solomine about his factory and its rascally owner. Solomine answered with monosyllables. Thereupon Goloushchine filled every one's glass with champagne, and bowing to Neshdanof, he said in a low voice:

"To the republic!" And he drained his glass with one draft.

Neshdanof pretended to drink; Solomine excused himself, saying he never drank wine in the morning; Markelof

angrily emptied his glass to the last drop. He was evidently very impatient. "We are just taking our ease here," he seemed to say, "and we don't take up the question!"

"Gentlemen," he said at last, somewhat peevishly, rapping on the table.

But just as he was about to speak there entered the room a man with very smooth hair, who was rather sickly-looking, and had a bottle-nose. He wore a nankeen caftan, such as is commonly worn by shopkeepers, and came forward cautiously, holding his arms out from his body. This individual bowed to the company and whispered a few words into Goloushkine's ear.

"At once, at once!" was the hasty answer. "Gentlemen, I must ask you to excuse me. Vania, my clerk, has just reminded me of something that compels me to leave you for a time; but I hope, gentlemen, that you will be good enough to come and eat a mouthful with me at three o'clock; we shall be much freer."

Solomine and Neshdanof did not know what answer to make; but Markelof, with the same ill-humor on his face and in his voice, answered at once:

"Certainly we will come! otherwise, what a farce we should be playing!"

"Thank you, thank you!" said Goloushkine, and he added with a bow to Markelof, "Whatever happens, I'll give a thousand rubles to the cause, you may be sure of that."

He thrust out three times his right hand with the thumb and little finger extended, as a proof of his sincerity. After he had accompanied his guests to the door, he stopped on the threshold, and said:

"I shall expect you at three o'clock."

"You may expect us," answered Markelof alone.

When they were all three in the street, Solomine said to them, "Gentlemen, I'm going to take a hackney coach and return to my factory. What can we do till dinner time? Pace the streets? As for our host, he reminds me of a goat from which you get neither wool nor milk."

"As for wool, there'll be plenty," growled Markelof testily. "Goloushkine has promised me some money. Unless

you want to be fastidious, we mustn't be too particular under the circumstances."

"I'm not fastidious, you know very well," answered Solomine quietly. "But I must ask why I should be there. Nevertheless," he added, with a smiling glance at Neshdanof, "if it will give you any pleasure, I'll remain; as the proverb says, 'It is well to die in company.'"

Markelof raised his head.

"Suppose we should go meanwhile to the public garden. It's a delightful day; we can look at the people."

"All right; let's go."

They started off, Markelof and Solomine in front, and Neshdanof behind.

XVIII.

NESH DANOF was in a strange state of mind. In only two days he had received so many new impressions, and seen so many new faces ! For the first time in his life he had united his fate with that of a young girl, with whom, apparently, he was in love ; he had taken the first steps in a matter to which apparently he had consecrated all his strength, and in short—was he happy ? No !

Did he hesitate ? Was he afraid ? Did he feel troubled ? By no means.

Did he feel on the other hand that tension of his whole being, that impetus which carries a man into the front ranks of the combatants, when the fight is hottest ? No longer.

Did he, in short, believe in this undertaking ? Did he believe in his love ? “ Oh ! cursed dilettante that you are ! skeptic ! ” fell from his lips. Why this fatigue, this reluctance to speak, except at moments when he forced himself to shout, and excited himself ? What was this internal voice which he tried in vain to stifle by his shouts ? And Marianne, this good and faithful friend, this pure strong soul, this brave young girl, she loved him in spite of all ! Ought he not to esteem himself happy to have met her, to have won her friendship, her love ? And the two men who were walking in front of him, Markelof and this Solomine, whom he hardly knew, but for whom he felt such profound sympathy, were they not very good representatives of Russian life, and was not their acquaintance another blessing ? Why this vague sense of unhappiness ? Why this sadness ? “ You’re a dreamer and a hypochondriac,” murmured his lips again. “ What sort of a radical are you ? Write your little verses, stuff yourself away in a corner with your little thoughts and your little, miserable impressions, bury yourself in all sorts of small psychologi-

cal subtleties, and above all, don't go and imagine that your caprice, your sickly, nervous exasperation, has anything in common with the manly indignation, the honest wrath of an earnest man !”

“O Hamlet, Prince of Denmark ! how to escape from your shadow ! How avoid imitating you in everything, even in the shameful pleasure one has in abusing oneself !”

“Alexis ! my friend ! The Russian Hamlet !” cried suddenly like an echo of his thoughts a shrill and well-known voice. “Can it be you ?”

Neshdanof raised his eyes and saw before him Pakline—Pakline in the costume of a Watteau shepherd, a buff jacket, no cravat, a straw hat, with sky-blue ribbon round it, on the back of his head, and on his feet shiny shoes.

Pakline came limping up to Neshdanof and took his hand.

“In the first place,” he said, “although we are in a public garden, we must throw ourselves into each other's arms, according to the old custom, and kiss each other thrice—one ! two ! three ! Secondly, know that if I had not met you to-day, you would have had the pleasure of seeing me to-morrow as large as life, for I know the place where you are staying, and I came to this town on purpose—but you shall know all that later. Thirdly, make me acquainted with your new friends. Tell me in two words who they are, and them, who I am, after which nothing will be wanting to our felicity !”

Neshdanof complied with his friend's request, introduced him to Markelof and Solomine, and then told who each of them was, where he lived, what he did, etc.

“Excellently done !” cried Pakline. “And now permit me to conduct you far from the crowd—although there is none, by the way—to a solitary bench upon which I am wont to install myself in my hours of reflection, and enjoy the beauties of nature. The view from it is charming ; you can see the governor's house, two black and white striped sentry-boxes, three policemen, and not one dog ! Don't be too much surprised, meanwhile, at the nonsense with which I'm trying so fruitlessly to make you laugh. My friends affirm that I represent Russian wit, which is doubtless the reason why I limp !”

Pakline conducted his friends to the "solitary bench," and made them sit down, having first driven two beggars off it. The young people "exchanged thoughts," a tiresome occupation, be it said, especially just at first, and a perfectly useless one.

"Wait!" exclaimed Pakline, suddenly turning to Neshdanof; "I must explain to you how I happen to be here;—you know that every summer I take my sister off somewhere or other, for change of air, and when I learned that you were going to live in the neighborhood of this town, I remembered that there were two very queer people here, a husband and wife, who are somewhat related to us through my mother. My father was of the people" (Neshdanof knew this detail, but Pakline mentioned it for the benefit of the others); "my mother was of noble birth, and we had a long standing invitation to make a visit to these relations of ours. And lo! we started off—and here we are! And really, you can't imagine how comfortably off we are here. But what creatures they are, really original! You ought to know them. What are you doing here? Where do you dine? And what have you come for?"

"We dine to-day with a certain Goloushkine—a merchant," replied Neshdanof.

"At what time?"

"At three."

"And you came to—in order to—"

Pakline glanced at Solomine, who smiled at Markelof, whose face darkened.

"But come, tell them, dear Alexis—make them some masonic sign or other; tell them in short that they needn't be on their guard with me. Ain't I one of you?"

"Goloushkine is also one of us," said Neshdanof.

"So! so! very good! But it is not nearly three o'clock yet. Come, let's go to my cousin's."

"Are you losing your senses? Would you have us go point blank—"

"Don't disturb yourself! Leave everything to me. Imagine an oasis. Neither politics nor literature nor anything belonging to the present day ever penetrates there. A little swell front house, such as is to be found nowhere

else ; the whole atmosphere of the place is rococo ; the people themselves are rococo ; the very air which you breathe is rococo ; everything you see is rococo ; Catherine II., powder, hoops, the eighteenth century personified ! As for the master and mistress of this house—picture to yourself two little old people, very, very old ! husband and wife ! of the same age, and unwrinkled ; plump, round, neat, real love-birds ; and their kindness amounts to folly, to saintliness—their kindness is unlimited ! You will tell me that unlimited kindness is often joined to a want of moral sense ; but I can't enter into those subtleties. I only know one thing, that my little old couple are the very best of good people ! They have never had any children—lucky mortals ! In the town, they are called the blessed, or the fools, or the innocents, whichever you prefer. They both wear the same costume : a striped cloak, made of a firm material not found elsewhere. They are astonishingly alike ; the only difference between them is that she wears a cap, and he a “kolpak,” with ruffles like those on the cap, but without a bow of ribbon. This ribbon bow is the only thing which distinguishes them from each other, the husband having no beard. He is called Fomoushka,* and she Fimoushka. I assure you it would be worth paying to see them. They are incredibly fond of each other, they welcome any one who comes to see them, and play off all their graces for them ! Only one thing is prohibited there, and that is smoking ; not that they are raskolniks,† but they detest the odor of tobacco. In their time you see there was scarcely any smoking. Canaries were also unknown then, so they have none in their house, and that's a mercy, don't you think so ? Well, won't you come ? ”

“ But—I don't know—” began Neshdanof.

“ Wait, I've not told you all yet. Their voices are so much alike that if you shut your eyes it would be hard to say which was speaking. There is a shade more expression

* Fomoushka, diminutive of Thomas, and Fimoushka, diminutive of Euphemia.—*Tr.*

† Old Believers, who have a horror of tobacco.

in Fomoushka's voice ; that's all. You, gentlemen, who are preparing yourselves for your great work, why, before plunging into the roaring torrent, why won't you go and take a dip first ? ”

“ In stagnant water ? ” interrupted Markelof.

“ And what of that ? Stagnant water if you will, but fresh and sweet. There are ponds of that sort on the steppes whose water is not running, it is true, but which remain clear and limpid because there are springs of fresh water at the bottom. Well, my little old couple have also at the bottom of their hearts hidden springs which are very, very pure. In short, if you would know how people used to live a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago, come with me without further delay. For there will come a day and an hour—necessarily the same day and hour for them both—when my two love-birds will fall from their perch, and all the past will die with them, and the little swell front house will disappear, and in its place will grow all that springs up wherever there is “ human nature,” as my grandmother says, nettles, burdock, thistles, wild sorrel, and wormwood ; the street even will cease to exist, other men will come, and you will see nothing like it again for all time.”

“ Well ! ” exclaimed Neshdanof, “ why shouldn't we go there now ? ”

“ I will gladly go,” said Solomine ; “ I've no business there, but it would be curious and interesting ; and if Mr. Pakline is really sure that our arrival will disturb no one, why not ? ”

“ Do come,” said Pakline ; “ they will be absolutely enchanted to see you. There's no need of ceremony, since I have told you what they are like. We'll make them sing to us. And you, Mr. Markelof, won't you come too ? ”

Markelof shrugged his shoulders with an ill-humored air.

“ I can't stay here all alone. Come on, show us the way.”

The young people arose from their bench.

“ What a somber personage you have there ! ” whispered Pakline to Neshdanof, pointing to Markelof. “ He looks to me like St. John the Baptist when he was living on

locusts—nothing but locusts without honey ! The other fellow,” added he, nodding toward Solomine, “the other one pleases me hugely—what a smile he has ! I’ve never seen that smile except on people who are superior to others without being conscious of it.”

“Are there any such people ?” asked Neshdanof.

“They’re scarce, but there are some,” replied Pakline.

XIX.

FOMOUSHKA and Fimoushka, that is to say, Foma (Thomas) Lawrentievitch and Evfimie (Euphemia) Paulovna Soubotchef, who both belonged by birth to the peculiarly Russian *petite noblesse*, were almost the oldest inhabitants of the town of S——.

Married very young, they established themselves in the old wooden mansion of their forefathers, situated on the outskirts of the town, where they had lived from time immemorial ; they never went on journeys, and they had never changed at all their habits or mode of life. Time seemed to stand still for them ; no “novelty” ever penetrated into their “oasis.”

They were not at all rich, but several times a year their peasants came, as they had done during their serfdom, to bring them poultry and provisions ; on a certain day the *starost* of their village came to present the *Obrok** and a couple of grouse, supposed to have been killed in their masters’s forest, although, in reality, the forest had long ceased to exist ; they invited the *starost* to take some tea in the anteroom ; presented him with an astrachan cap, a pair of doeskin gloves, and wished him a pleasant journey home.

Their house was full of *dvorovie* (domestic servants), according to the ancient custom. The old waiter, Kallio-pitch, dressed in a jacket with standing collar, made of very thick cloth, and buttoned with small copper buttons, announced, as he had always been accustomed to do, with solemn drawling tones, that “the dinner is served,” and went to sleep behind his mistress’s chair. He had charge of the sideboard, and administered the different decanters of “cardamon” or “citron.”

* *Obrok*, annual tribute which the peasants pay their masters.—*Tr.*

When he was asked if he had never heard of the freeing of the serfs, he invariably replied that there was a great deal of stupid gossip in the world ; that there was freedom among the Turks, but that as for him, thank God, he had been spared that, so far.

There was a female dwarf in the establishment, Poufka by name, kept to amuse her master and mistress. The aged housekeeper, Vaxsilievna, came in at dinner-time, with a dark-colored handkerchief twisted round her head, and in a tremulous voice talked of the latest news : of Napoleon First, of the war of 1812, of the Antichrist, of albinos ; sometimes in a despondent attitude, with her chin resting on the palm of her hand, she would tell her dreams and interpret them ; she would also relate what she had read in the cards.

The Soubotchefs' very house was different from all the other houses of the town ; it was built entirely of oak, with windows exactly square, which were double, winter and summer alike. It was filled with all sorts of little rooms, closets, corners, and cubby-holes, ballustraded flights of steps, little shelves for beds, supported by tiny columns of turned wood, dark closets, and corridors.

In front of the house there was an inclosure, behind it a garden, and this garden was all full of barns, outhouses for rubbish, coach-houses, cellars, and ice-houses, a regular nest in short. These buildings were not very well fitted up, some were even in ruins ; but they were left untouched, because they were old.

The Soubotchefs had only two horses, both extremely old and very rough-coated and sway-backed ; one was so old that he was covered with patches of white hair, and was called the Immovable. They were harnessed, once a month at the most, to a strange vehicle, well known to the whole town, which looked very like a globe with the front quarter cut out ; it was lined with yellow stuff of foreign make, covered with little tufts, the size of peas, which looked like warts. The last piece of this stuff was probably woven at Utrecht or Lyons, in the time of the Empress Elizabeth.

The coachman, worthy man, was also extraordinarily old, and saturated with an odor of greasy leather and tar ; his

beard grew up to his eyes, and his eyebrows fell in little cascades down to his beard. He was so slow in his movements that it took him five good minutes to take a pinch of snuff, two minutes to stick his whip into his belt, and more than two hours to harness the Immovable. He was called Pufishka withal.*

When the Soubotchefs were out driving and there was the least ascent, they were seized with fright (it was just the same way down hill) ; they grasped the straps with both hands and recited aloud a sort of incantation, "May the horses, the horses, have the strength of Samson ! May we, we, be as light as feathers !"

The whole town looked upon them as eccentric, almost mad in fact. They themselves were well aware that they did not follow the customs of to-day ; but that troubled them very little. They lived absolutely according to the fashion of the time when they were born, or when they grew up, or when they were married. On one point only they departed from the old customs : never, on any account, had they prosecuted or punished any one. When one of their people was convicted of being a drunkard, or a downright thief, they bore it long and patiently—as one endures bad weather—before making up their minds to get rid of him, to find him a place with some one else. "Let every one take their turn," they would say. "It is time some one else should bear with him, now."

But this misfortune rarely befell them ; so rarely that, when it did occur, it made an epoch in their lives. They would say, for instance, "That was a long time ago ; that was when we had that troublesome fellow Aldoshka ;" or, again, "at the time when the fur cap with a fox's brush, which had belonged to our grandfather, was stolen." At the Soubotchefs' caps of that sort were still to be found.

There was still another trait characteristic of the manners of former times, which was lacking in them : neither Fomoushka or Fimoushka were very religious. Fomoushka piqued himself on being a follower of Voltaire ; and Fimoushka was mortally afraid of priests, whom she thought

* Diminutive of Porphyrius.—*Tr.*

had the evil eye. "A priest has been to see me," she would say. "He did not stay long, but the cream has turned sour."

They rarely went to church; and only fasted as Catholics do, who allow themselves milk, butter, and eggs. This was known in the town, and their reputation was, of course, not much improved by it. But it was impossible to withstand their kindness; and, in spite of the unsparing railery of which they were the objects, in spite of their being called "innocents," they were respected by everybody.

Yes, they were respected, but were not visited, which did not disturb them much, however. They were never tired of each other, and therefore were constantly together, wishing for no other society.

Neither Fomoushka or Fimoushka, had ever been ill, and if either of them felt in the least indisposed, they both took an infusion of linden leaves, or rubbed their backs with warm oil, or poured melted fat upon the soles of their feet, and the indisposition was promptly cured.

Their day's programme never varied; they rose late, took their morning chocolate in little cups, shaped like mortars. "Tea," they would say, "was not the fashion in our day." They sat opposite one another and conversed (they were never at a loss for subjects), or read the "*Agreeable Pastime*," the "*Mirror of the World*," "*The Aonides*," or turned the leaves of an old album bound in red morocco, and edged with gilt, which, according to an inscription on the fly-leaf, had formerly belonged to a certain Madame Barbe de Kabiline. When and how this album had fallen into their hands, they themselves had forgotten.

This album contained some French poetry, and several Russian poems or prose articles, of which the following short reflection upon Cicero may give an idea; in what disposition of mind Cicero accepted the position of quæstor he himself explains as follows:

"Having called upon the gods to bear witness to the purity of his sentiments in all the positions with which he had been honored, so far, he considered himself bound by the most sacred bonds to fill worthily the aforesaid positions of trust; and in this intention he would not only resist all temptation to unlawful pleasures, but he would even avoid with extreme care those amusements which seemed almost indispensable."

Lower down on the page were these words :

“Written in Siberia, amid the pangs of cold and hunger.”

There was also a very curious poem entitled *Tircis*, in which were to be found such verses as the following :

“The universe is steeped in calm,
The dew sparkles prettily,
It caresses and refreshes nature,
And gives it new life.

“Tircis alone, with soul oppressed,
Suffers self-inflicted torture.
When the lovely Annette is not with him
Nothing can cheer his melancholy.”

And some important verses written by a soldier on the
“16th day of May, 1790” :

“I shall never forget thee,
Oh, thou charming spot !
I shall forever remember
The days which have passed so agreeably,
The days which I have had the honor
Of spending with thy owners
In this most respectable circle,
With many matrons, and young ladies,
And many other interesting persons.”

The last page of the album contained, besides poetry, recipes of remedies for stomach ache, spasms, etc., and even an excellent vermifuge.

The Soubotchefs dined at noon precisely, and only ate old-fashioned dishes : buttermilk fritters, sour soup with cucumbers, mincemeat with cream and garlic, buckwheat porridge, fish pie, chicken *au safran*, mint with honey, etc. After dinner they took a nap, never more than an hour long, then waked up to sit opposite one another and drink whortleberry water, or a sort of effervescent lemonade, which generally all went off in foam, to their great amusement, and to the great annoyance of Kalliopitch, who had to wipe it off from everything, and grumbled long against the housekeeper and the cook, who had invented

this drink. "What's it good for?" he would say, "except to spoil the furniture?"

After this, the Soubotchefs would amuse themselves with more reading, or with laughing at the dwarf Poufka, or would sing together some old songs (their voices were precisely alike, high, feeble, uncertain, and even somewhat hoarse, especially after they had taken their nap, but not disagreeable on the whole); sometimes they played cards, but always at old-fashioned games, such as the crab or the flag, or even Boston.

Then the samovar made its appearance; they took tea in the evening; this was the only concession they made to the spirit of the age; but they repeated every day that it was a weakness, and that to the use of this Chinese herb was in great measure due the physical deterioration of the people.

Generally they refrained from blaming the present or praising the past; they had always lived in the same manner from childhood upwards; but so long as they were not obliged to change, they were quite willing to concede that other people might live differently, and even better.

At eight o'clock Kalliopitch served the supper, with the inevitable *okroshka*,* and at nine the large feather beds received into their soft embrace the plump little bodies of Fomoushka and Fimoushka, and peaceful slumber soon descended upon their eyelids. All noise died gradually away in the little old house, the lamp burned before the images, a vague odor of musk and of balm floated in the air, the cricket sang, and the cheery innocent little couple slept in peace.

Such were these mad people, or as Pakline called them, these "love-birds," who had given shelter to his sister, and to whose house he conducted his friends.

Pakline's sister was an intelligent girl and rather pretty,—her eyes in particular were magnificent—but her unfortunate deformity deprived her of all grace, all gayety, and made her suspicious and almost ill-tempered. Moreover,

* A little flask containing some small beer.

she had a very singular first name : she was called Snan-doulia ! Her brother tried to rebaptize her Sophie, but she obstinately preferred to keep her odd name, saying that a person who was hunch-backed ought to be called Snan-doulia.

She was a good musician, and played the piano quite well.

"That's because of my spider fingers," she would say, not without bitterness, "the fingers of a hunchback."

The four visitors arrived just as Fomoushka and Fimoushka had taken their siesta, and were about to drink their whortleberry water.

"Here we enter the eighteenth century !" cried Pakline, as they stepped over the threshold of the house.

And in fact the eighteenth century met their eyes in the anteroom, in the shape of a little screen, on the blue ground of which were pasted black silhouettes of ladies and gentlemen with their hair dressed in the fashion of the last century.

These silhouettes, introduced by Lavater, were very much the rage in Russia about 1780.

The unexpected appearance of so many strangers—three at once !—made quite a commotion in this little establishment, where visitors were such a rarity. Then might be heard the coming and going of bare feet and of heavy boots, faces peeped in and quickly vanished, a door slammed, some one groaned, some one else burst out laughing, and a scolding voice whispered :

"Go to the devil !"

At last Kalliopitch appeared with his eternal jacket, and holding open the door of the "salon," announced with sonorous voice :

"Mr. Sila Simonitch and some other gentlemen !" The master and mistress were much less disturbed than their servants. The irruption of four tall young fellows into their drawing-room, quite a large one, by the way, rather surprised them, it is true ; but Pakline at once reassured them, and in his usual joking fashion presented the three new-comers in succession as quiet people having no connection with "the crown."

Fomoushka and Fimoushka had a special dislike for people belonging to "the crown," that is, for government employees.

Snandoulia, whose brother had called her, soon made her appearance; she was much more agitated and embarrassed than the old Soubotchefs. They, with one voice and in the same words, begged their guests to be seated, and asked them what they would have, tea, chocolate, or perhaps soda-water and sweetmeats? But learning that their visitors wished nothing, having just breakfasted at the house of a merchant named Goloushkine, with whom they were to dine, they no longer insisted, but crossing their little arms on their little chests in precisely the same way, they began to talk and to fulfill their duty as hosts.

The conversation languished somewhat at first, but it soon became more animated. Pakline greatly amused the two old people with a well-known anecdote of Gogol, about a general who easily made his way into a church crowded full of people, because he was a general; and of a pie so powerful that it found its way into a stomach stuffed as full as the church!

This story made them laugh till they cried. Their laugh was in keeping with all the rest of them, shrill, squeaky, jerky, and ending in a cough with red, warm faces.

Pakline had noticed that people like the Soubotchefs are strongly and almost convulsively affected by quotations from Gogol; but as his intention was less to entertain the two old people themselves than to show them off to his companions, he changed his method of attack, and managed so well that in a very short time the couple took courage and entered fairly into the spirit of the thing.

Fomoushka took from his pocket and showed to his visitors his favorite snuff-box, on which could be counted thirty-six human figures in different attitudes; all these figures had been long ago effaced by rubbing, but Fomoushka saw them still; he saw them; he could count them one after another and point them out.

"See," he said, "there's somebody looking out of a window. Do you see? He's sticking out his head."

And the place to which he pointed with the end of his little crooked forefinger was as smooth as all the rest of the cover.

Then he called his guest's attention to an oil painting hanging above his head on the wall behind him, which represented a profile view of a huntsman, on a light bay horse, galloping across a snowy plain. The huntsman wore a tall white sheepskin cap with a blue streamer, a camel's hair tunic, bordered with velvet and gathered in at the waist by a belt made of gilt-metal plates; an embroidered silk glove was thrust through his belt, and a poignard, with inlaid silver handle, hung at one side. The huntsman, who looked young and plump, held in one hand an enormous horn, decorated with gold tassels; in the other he held the reins and a whip; the horse's four feet were all in the air at once, and the artist had carefully painted the four horse-shoes, not forgetting the nails.

"Observe," said Fomoushka, pointing out with the same dimpled finger four semicircular marks in the white ground behind the horse's feet; "observe the foot-marks in the snow! He has forgotten nothing!"

Why there were only four of these marks, and why there were no others behind them, was a point which Fomoushka passed over in silence.

"That huntsman—is myself!" added he after a moment's hesitation, with a modestly complacent smile.

"What!" exclaimed Neshdanof, "you have been a hunter?"

"Yes—but not for a long time. Once while in full gallop, I was thrown over my horse's head, and was wounded on the *kourpei*. So that Fimoushka had a terrible fright, and forbade my hunting, so that was the end of it."

"Where did you say you hurt yourself?" asked Neshdanof.

"On the *kourpei*," repeated Fimoushka in low tones.

The visitors looked at each other without saying anything. They did not at all know what this word meant. Markelof indeed knew that the plume on a cossack cap, or tcherkesse, is called *kourpei*, but how could Fomoushka have wounded himself on that plume? And no one had the courage to ask him for an explanation.

"Oh ! how you are showing off ! " suddenly exclaimed Fimouska. " It's my turn now ! "

She opened a little "*bonheur du jour*," for so was called a sort of antique secretary, whose rounded cover when raised slipped back into a groove—and took from it a water-color miniature in an oval bronze frame ; this miniature represented a child four years old, entirely naked, with a quiver slung crosswise over its shoulders by a blue ribbon ; it held in its hand an arrow, the point of which it was feeling with its fingers. The child's hair was very curly, and it smiled with a slight squint.

Fimoushka showed the water-color to the young people.

"This is I ! " said she.

"You ? "

"Yes, I—when I was little. There was a French painter, an excellent artist, who used to visit my parents ; he made this portrait of me for a birthday gift to my late father. Oh, what a pleasant man that Frenchman was ! He came to see us several times after that. When he came into a room, he would draw back his foot with a gliding motion, then he would shake it a minute in the air, and kiss your hand ! And when he took leave he would kiss his own hand, upon my word ! and he would bow to right and to left, before and behind ! That Frenchman was a very charming man."

They all praised the picture, and Pakline even declared that it was still a striking likeness.

In this connection Fomoushka spoke of the French of to-day, and said that they must have become very wicked.

"Why so, Foma Lawrentievitch ? " some one asked him.

"Why ? Just see what names they have ! "

"For instance ? "

"For instance : Nojang-Sang-Lorrang (*Nogent-Saint-Laurent*) ; that's a regular bandit's name ! "

Fomoushka also asked the name of the present sovereign of France. They told him "Napoleon."

That appeared to surprise and sadden him.

"What ! As old a man as that ? " he began. But he interrupted himself and looked about with an anxious air.

He knew very little French, only having read Voltaire

in translation (he had in a favorite little box under his pillow a manuscript translation of "*Candide*"), but he occasionally let fall a phrase such as "*fausse parquet*" (in the sense of "that is suspicious" or "questionable"), an expression for which he was much ridiculed, until one day a very learned Frenchman explained that it was an old parliamentary term much used in France before 1789.

Taking advantage of the conversation turning upon France and the French, Fimoushka decided to clear up a doubtful point which had been much in her mind of late. She first thought of asking Markelof, but he looked at her in such a grave way! Solomine was less alarming—"but no!" she said to herself, "he looks like a common man, it's not likely that he knows French!" She addressed Neshdanof:

"I would like to ask you—" she began, "—excuse me, but my cousin here, Sila Simonitch, is always making fun of me, poor old woman that I am, because of my ignorance—"

"Ask, I beg of you."

"This is what it is: if a person wishes to employ the French 'dialect' to ask what something is, ought they to say, '*Quécé—quécé—qué—cèlà?*'"

"Yes."

"And could you also say, '*Quécé—qué—cèlà?*'"

"Certainly."

"Or merely, '*Qué célà?*'"

"Yes, indeed."

"And all mean the same thing?"

"Yes."

Fimoushka reflected a moment, and then made a gesture of resignation.

"Well, Sila," she said at length, "I was wrong and you were right. But certainly the French are a singular people."

Pakline then begged the two old people to sing a little romance. They both began to laugh and were surprised that he should have thought of such a thing; but they were soon persuaded to do so on condition that Snandoulia should go to the clavichord and play an accompaniment. She already knew what.

There was a little old clavichord in one corner of the room which the guests had not noticed. Snandoulia seated herself before it, and struck a few chords. This clavichord gave forth such poor, thin, weak, tinkling sounds, Neshdanof had never heard anything like it before in his life ; but they soon struck up their little romance.

“ Is it to find sorrow ? ”

began Fomoushka :

“ Sorrow in love,
That we have received from the gods
A heart capable of loving ? ”

Fimoushka continued :

“ Exists there anywhere on the earth
The feeling of love
Without sorrow, without suffering ? ”

Fomoushka replied :

“ Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere ! ”

and Fimoushka repeated :

“ Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere ! ”

Then both together :

“ Love abides with suffering
Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere ! ”

and Fomoushka repeated as a solo :

“ Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere ! ”

“ Bravi ! ” replied Pakline ; “ let us have another verse ! ”

“ Very well,” replied Fomoushka ; “ but stop a minute ; Snandoulia Samsonovna, what became of the trill ? After my reply there ought to be a trill.”

“ Very well,” answered Snandoulia, “ I’ll make a trill for you.”

Fomoushka began :

“ Is there any one in the universe,
Who has loved without suffering tortures,
Who has ever loved
Without weeping and groaning ? ”

and Fimoushka :

“ If the heart must be overwhelmed by sorrow,
As a boat by the ocean waves,
Why was it given to us
To suffer, suffer, suffer ? ”

cried Fomoushka ; then he stopped to give Snandoulia the time to make her trill. After which Fimoushka took it up again :

“ To suffer, suffer, suffer ! ”

and both in unison :

“ Ye gods, take back my heart,
I want it no more, more, more ! ”

and the couplet was completed by another trill.

“ Bravi ! bravi ! ” cried all present—except Markelof—clapping their hands.

While the applause gradually died away, Neshdanof asked himself :

“ Is it possible that these people don't understand that they are playing the part of buffoons, or something very like it ? Probably they do not, or perhaps they feel it and say to themselves, ‘ What difference does it make ? we do no one any harm, and we entertain our guests ! ’ And in fact they are right after all, perfectly right.”

Under the influence of this thought he at once began to pay them warm compliments, in answer to which they bowed low but without rising from their arm-chairs.

At this moment the door of a neighboring room—a sleeping chamber or servants' room whence for some minutes past had issued sounds of whispering—opened quickly and admitted the dwarf Poufka, accompanied by the old housekeeper Vassilievna. The dwarf began to squawk and make grimaces, while the old servant sometimes stopped her, and sometimes inspired her to fresh efforts.

Markelof, who for a long time had given signs of impatience (Solomine confined himself to smiling rather more than usual), turned suddenly upon Fomoushka.

“ I should never have imagined,” he began, “ that you, with your cultivated mind, and your admiration of Vol-

taire, of which I have been told, could divert yourself with a thing which should inspire pity, in a word with a deformity !”

Then he remembered that Pakline's sister was deformed, and stopped speaking. Fomoushka blushed like a child, arranged his cap on his head, stammered, “What? it is not I! it is she herself.”

But here Poufka charged down upon Markelof.

“Who told you to come and insult my master?” she sputtered. “You're jealous because they've taken me in and fed and cared for me, poor unfortunate creature that I am. You grudge people their good luck! Where did you come from, you black-faced good-for-naught, with your beetle mustaches?”

While saying this she imitated with her thick short fingers Markelof's mustaches. Vassilievna burst out laughing, stretching her toothless mouth from ear to ear, and her laugh was echoed in the next room.

“I'm not criticising you, you know,” continued Markelof, still addressing Fomoushka; “it is certainly a good work to give shelter to the poor and needy. But let me tell you that I think that to have all you want—to live in clover, not plundering any one, but at the same time not lifting your finger to help your neighbor, is not being good; for my part, at least, to speak frankly, I would not give a pin for such goodness !”

Whereupon Poufka set up a deafening howl. She had not caught one word of Markelof's speech, but she understood that this “black-faced” fellow was abusing her master and mistress. The impudent creature!

Vassilievna also muttered something with an angry look. As for Fomoushka he crossed his arms on his chest and turning to his wife said, almost in tears:

“Fomoushka, my love, do you hear what our guest has just said? You and I are sinners, wicked people, Pharisees, we live in clover! It is our duty to go out into the streets broom in hand, and earn our own living; oh! oh! oh!”

Hearing these sad words, Poufka howled louder than ever, and Fimoushka, with her eyes half shut and lips drawn in, took a long breath, preparatory to a lamentable groan.

Heaven knows how the matter would have ended if Pakline had not interfered.

"What's all this?" said he, waving his hand with a loud laugh. "Aren't you ashamed? Mr. Markelof intended a little joke, but as he has a very serious face, his jest seemed like sober earnest. And you were taken in by it! But it was not so at all! My good little Euphemia Paulovna, it will soon be time for us to go, and do you know what you must do for us in the meantime? You must tell our fortunes—you tell them so well! Come, Snandoulia, get the cards."

Fimoushka cast a look at her husband, and seeing him sitting as usual, having regained his customary calm, she also was quieted.

"The cards, the cards," she said; "but I'm afraid I have forgotten how, my dear! It's so long since I've had the cards in my hands!"

And she took from Snandoulia a very old pack of cards, an *ombre* pack.

"Whose fortune shall I tell?"

"All our fortunes!" cried Pakline, and added to himself: "What a dear little thing she is, you can twist her round your finger; it's delightful! All our fortunes, granny, all!" he repeated aloud. "Tell us our destiny, character, future,—everything!"

Fimoushka began to deal out the cards, but all of a sudden she threw down the pack on the table.

"What's the use of cards? I've no need of them to know the character of each one of you! And what the character is, the destiny is. He" (and she pointed to Solomon) "is constant and a man whom it is refreshing to meet; he" (she threatened Markelof with her finger) "is a dangerous, volcanic man." Poufka stuck out her tongue at Markelof; "as for you" (she looked at Pakline), "there's no need for me to tell you what you are, you're a hare-brained fellow. He—" she pointed to Neshdanof, and then hesitated.

"What?" he asked; "speak, I beg of you: what sort of a man am I?"

"What sort of man are you!" said Fimoushka slowly.

"you're a man who is worthy of pity. That is what you are."

Neshdanof winced.

"Worthy of pity ! · Why so ?"

"Merely because you excite my pity, that's all."

"But why ?"

"Because my eyes tell me so. Do you suppose I'm stupid ? I'm as clever as you, in spite of your red hair. You excite my compassion : that's your fortune."

All were silent and looked at one another without speaking.

"Well, good-by, my friends !" cried Pakline. "We have been here a long time and I am afraid we have bored you. These gentlemen must go now, and I must go too. Good-by, and many thanks for your kind reception of us."

"Good-by, good-by, come to see us again and don't forget us," said Fomoushka and Fimoushka, with one voice.

Then Fomoushka intoned the words of the liturgy :
"Many, many, many years."

"Many, many," repeated Kalliopitch, in a low tone, while opening the door for the young people.

And all four found themselves outside the little swell-front house, while Poufka yelled out of the window at them, "Idiots ! idiots !"

Pakline laughed heartily, but his laugh had no echo ; and even Markelof looked at his companions, one after the other, as if he expected a word of reproach from them.

Solomine only smiled as usual.

X X.

“WELL,” said Pakline, who was the first to break the silence, “we have come out from the eighteenth century: now let us go to the twentieth. Goloushchine is such an advanced man that it would be an insult to put him in our own century, in the nineteenth.”

“You know him then?” asked Neshdanof.

“The world is full of the sound of his name, and I said ‘we’ because I mean to go with you to see him.”

“What? When you don’t know him?”

“How strange you are! Did you know my love birds?”

“But you introduced us.”

“Well, you can introduce me! There are no secrets between you and me. As for Goloushchine, he is a man of large views. He will be charmed to welcome a new face, you will see that he will! Besides, we are very informal here at S——!”

“Yes,” grumbled Markelof, “I see you are very informal, indeed.”

Pakline shook his head.

“You say that for my benefit—well, I’ve deserved your reproach. But believe me, my new comrade, it would be better for you to drop awhile the gloomy ideas engendered by your bilious temperament. And, above all—”

“Sir, my new comrade,” interrupted Markelof roughly, “allow me to tell you, in my turn, as a precautionary measure, that I never had the least love of joking, and to-day I care for it less than ever. As to my temperament, you’ve hardly had time to know it, as we met to-day for the first time.”

“Well, well, don’t get angry! I’ll believe you without so much ceremony.”

And turning to Solomine, he exclaimed: “You, whom

the penetrating Fimoushka pronounced to be a refreshing man, and who really are somewhat sedative in your influence, say if I intended to be disagreeable to any one, or to make inopportune jokes ; I simply proposed to accompany you to Goloushchine's, and I'm a perfectly inoffensive person. It's not my fault that Mr. Markelof has a sallow complexion."

Solomine shrugged first one shoulder and then the other, as was his wont when hesitating what to reply.

"Doubtless," he said at last, "you neither could nor would wound any one, and why shouldn't you go with us to Mr. Goloushchine's? I am sure that we shall pass our time there as agreeably and as profitably as we did at your cousins."

Pakline shook his finger at him.

"Oh, oh ! I see that you're malicious, too ! But you're going to Goloushchine's all the same ?"

"Oh, yes ! My day is lost already !"

"Well, come then, 'forward march !' To the twentieth century ! Neshdanof, you're the pioneer of progress, show us the way !"

"Very well ; march ! But don't make your jokes too many times over, or we might think your supply was running short."

"Don't be afraid. I shall always have enough to be more than a match for you and your kind," answered Pakline gayly, and he hastened on in front, with quicker steps, or as he himself expressed it, with quicker limp.

"He's a very amusing fellow !" said Solomine, who followed him, arm in arm with Neshdanof. "If by chance, which God forbid, they send us all to Siberia, we shall have some one to amuse us."

Markelof walked silently along behind the others.

While all this was going on elsewhere, at Goloushchine's they were making preparations for a very "*chic*" dinner. They had prepared a very fat and very bad "*oukha* ;" * divers "*patisho*" (*pat's chauds*), and "*fricassée*" (Goloushchine, who, in spite of his old-fashioned religion, lived on the

* *Oukha*. A kind of fish soup.

summit of European civilization, tolerated nothing but French cookery; he had taken his cook from a club, whence he had been sent away for being too dirty); and above all, they had put enough bottles of champagne to cool.

The master of the house received his guests with grimaces, with awkward and hurried manners, and with the forced laugh peculiar to him. He was enchanted at Pakline's coming, as the latter had predicted, and contented himself with saying, "He's one of us, is he not?"

Then he exclaimed, without waiting for a reply:

"But of course he is."

Then he told them that he had just come from that "*toqué*" of a governor, who was always bothering him about confounded benevolent institutions!

In reality it would be hard to say which delighted Goloushchine most, the honor of being received by the governor or the pleasure of speaking ill of that personage to young people of the advanced party. Then he presented to them the promised proselyte, who proved to be the same sleek, consumptive-looking young man with a prominent nose, who had come into the room that morning to whisper to Goloushchine, and who was Vassia, his clerk, in fact.

"He's not much of a talker," said Goloushchine, pointing at him with all five fingers at once; "but he is devoted to the cause heart and soul."

And Vassia bowed, blushed, cast down his eyes, smiled, and showed his teeth, all in such a way that it would be hard to say whether he was a perfect fool or an accomplished knave.

"Come to table, gentlemen, come to table!" cried the host, and they sat down to a table well furnished with side-dishes.

Soon after the *oukha*, Goloushchine called for the champagne, which fell in great clots into the glasses like congealed fat.

"To the success of our—our enterprise!" exclaimed Goloushchine, winking his eye and nodding his head in the direction of the servant, as if to imply that they must be prudent in the presence of a stranger. The proselyte Vas-

sia was persistently silent ; seated on the extreme edge of his chair, he showed in his whole attitude an obsequious servility which was little in harmony with the energetic convictions which his master attributed to him, but he drank desperately. The other guests talked ; that is to say, the host and Pakline, especially Pakline.

Neshdanof felt a vague, dull sense of discomfort, and Markelof was as indignant and angry as he had been at the Soubotchefs', but in a different way ; Solomine occupied himself by observing all that went on around him.

Pakline was as happy as a king ! his daring words greatly pleased Goloushkine, who never suspected that this " little cripple " kept whispering in the ear of Neshdanof, who sat next him, the most cruel jokes at his, Goloushkine's, expense. He took Pakline, and this was just what pleased him, for a good-natured creature who could be patronized. If he had sat next him he would have poked him in the ribs ; he made friendly signs to him across the table, and nodded at him. Unluckily he was separated from him by Markelof, that " somber shadow," and by Solomine. But at every word of Pakline's he doubled himself up with laughter ; he even laughed in anticipation every time Pakline opened his mouth, tapping himself on the stomach and showing his ugly blue gums.

Pakline soon understood what was wanted of him, and set himself to rail at everything (a very congenial occupation, by the way) and at everybody : conservatives, liberals, bureaucrats, advocates, trustees, proprietors, members of the Zemstvo,* St. Petersburg, Moscow, all went through the mill.

" Yes, yes, yes, yes ! " repeated Goloushkine. " That's it, that's it ! There's our mayor, for instance, a first-class jackass ! a regular blockhead ! You explain to him anything you please, and he doesn't understand one word ! Our governor is just as bad ! "

" Is your governor stupid ? " asked Pakline.

" I told you he was an ass ! "

" Did you ever notice whether he lisps, or speaks through his nose ? "

* Provincial assemblies ; a sort of municipal council.—*Tr.*

"Why?" asked Goloushkine in some perplexity.

"Why, don't you know? With us, in Russia, the great civil dignitaries lisp, and generals speak through the nose? It's only the loftiest personages of the kingdom, who both lisp and speak through their nose at the same time."

Goloushkine laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Yes—yes—" he stammered. "He speaks—through his nose—he belongs to the military!"

"Booby!" said Pakline to himself.

Some minutes later, Goloushkine exclaimed, "With us, in Russia, here, everything is rotten, everything."

Pakline was just then saying, in an undertone, to his neighbor, Neshdanof, "Why does he move his arms, as if his coat were tight in the armholes? But," he added aloud, with an insinuating air, "believe me, most worthy Kapiton Andreitch, half measures are of no use with us."

"Half measures!" roared Goloushkine, who had suddenly stopped laughing and put on a most ferocious expression. "Everything must be torn up root and branch! Drink, Vassia! you son of a sea cook!"

"You see, I am drinking, Kapiton Andreitch!" replied the clerk, draining his glass down to the last drop.

Goloushkine also swallowed a glassful.

"How does he keep from bursting?" whispered Pakline to Neshdanof.

"Long habit," answered the latter.

But the clerk was not the only one to drink. Wine loosened everybody's tongue, and Neshdanof, Markelof, Solomine himself, gradually joined in the conversation. Neshdanof, with a sort of disgust and scorn of himself, at first, because he found it hard to sustain his part, until he had succeeded in lashing himself into a sort of factitious enthusiasm; he began by saying, that "It was time to have done with vain words, and to act!"

He spoke of the field of labor they had found, and, a moment after, without suspecting that he was contradicting himself, he asked them if they could point to any serious or real elements on which they could depend, saying, "That, for his part, he did not see them. In society, no sympathy; among the people, no comprehension of the situation. How will you get around that?"

No one made any objections to what he said, not so much that there were none to make, as that no one followed out his idea.

Markelof then began to speak, and in his hollow, querulous voice, spun out a lengthy discourse, made up of monotonous phrases, some of them oft-repeated.

"You would think he was chopping cabbages," murmured Pakline.

It would have been hard to unravel the real subject of his discourse; occasionally he uttered the word "artillery;" he was probably alluding to defects he had discovered in its organization. Germans and aides-de-camp also came in for their share of abuse.

Solomine too, took up the theme, and observed that there were two ways of waiting: waiting with folded arms, and waiting while taking all needful precautions.

"We don't want any half-way radicals," grumbled Markelof.

"Up to the present time," replied Solomine, "they have tried starting from the top; we will try starting from the bottom."

"Moderates may go to the devil!" cried Goloushchine, with a savage air. "We must finish it with one blow."

"In other words, we must jump out a window?"

"Yes, and I'll jump out," howled Goloushchine. "I'll jump out! And Vassia shall jump out! I will say to him, 'Jump!' and he will jump. Won't you, Vassia?"

The clerk emptied his glass.

"Where you go, Kapiton Andreïtch, we will follow you. Is it for us to dispute your will?"

"I should like to see you! I would twist you till you were as crooked as a ram's horn!"

The discussion soon degenerated into what is called by toppers "building the tower of Babel." It was a tremendous uproar. Just as outside, in the mild autumn air, the first flakes of snow were whirling and skurrying to the ground, within, in the heated atmosphere of Goloushchine's dining-room, whirls of words struggled with words, pouring out one over the other: progress, government, literature, the question of taxes, the religious question, the woman ques-

tion, the court question, classicism, realism, communism, nihilism—international, clerical, liberal, capital ; administration, organization, association, and even crystallization !

Goloushchine was delighted, transported ; this uproar filled him with rapture, he could wish for nothing better, he was in the seventh heaven ! He was triumphant. "This is the sort of people we are !" he seemed to say. "Stand back, or I'll kill you ! Make way for Kapiton Goloushchine !"

The clerk Vassia was so far gone that he held an animated conversation with his plate ; then cried out furiously : "What the devil is a progymnese ?"

Goloushchine suddenly straightened himself, and throwing back his crimson countenance, on which an expression of triumph and overbearing brutality was oddly mingled with secret fear and even trepidation, he cried out with the full strength of his lungs :

"I'll sacrifice another thousand, Vassia !"

"There ! there ! don't agitate yourself !" replied Vassia in a low tone.

Pakline, pale and covered with perspiration (in the last quarter of an hour he had made as many libations as the clerk), sprang from his seat, and raising both hands above his head, exclaimed, with a heavy accent on each syllable :

"'Sacrifice !' 'Sacrifice !' Oh, what a profanation of a sacred word ! Sacrifice ! What ! no one dare raise himself to thee ; no one can fulfill the obligations thou imposest ; no one here, at least ; and this blockhead, this idiot, this vile money-bag, gives a shake to his ignoble purse, he throws down a handful of rubles, he cries, 'Sacrifice !' and expects to be thanked. Expects to be crowned with laurels. The low rascal !"

Probably Goloushchine did not hear or did not understand ! perhaps he even considered the words of Pakline as a joke, for he repeated again, "Yes ; a *thousand* rubles ! On the word of Kapiton Goloushchine ! sure as gospel !"

He rummaged in his pocket for a moment.

"There, there's the money ; take it, swallow it, and remember Kapiton !"

When flushed with wine he spoke of himself in the third person, as children do.

Markelof silently picked up the bank-notes spread out on the wine-stained table-cloth. After which, as there was no reason for their longer stay, and as moreover it was growing late, they arose from the table, took their hats, and departed.

When they got into the street they were all a little dizzy, especially Pakline.

"Well, where shall we go now?" he said, with some difficulty.

"I don't know where you are going," replied Solomine, "but I'm going home."

"To the factory?"

"To the factory."

"At this time of night, and on foot?"

"Why not? There are neither thieves nor wolves in these parts, and the walk will do me good. The night air is so fresh."

"But it is four versts."

"Well, what if it were five? *Au revoir*, gentlemen!"

Solomine buttoned up his coat, pulled his cap down over his eyes, lit a cigar, and set off at a good pace.

"And where are you going?" Pakline asked Neshdanof.

"Home with him."

He pointed to Markelof, who was standing motionless, his arms crossed on his chest.

"We have a carriage and horses."

"Ah! very well. And I, my friend, I shall go to the oasis, to Fomoushka and Fimoushka. Now, comrade, would you like to hear my opinion? That house and this are both madhouses; with this difference, that in the eighteenth century house we approach more nearly to real Russian life than in this of the twentieth century. Good evening, gentlemen; I'm drunk, don't mind me! Just listen to one thing more. There's not a better woman in the world than my sister Snandoulia! Ah, well, my sister is deformed, and is named Snandoulia! It's always so in this world. Besides, that's a good name for her. Do you know who St. Snandoulia was? She was a charitable

woman, who visited prisons, dressed the prisoners' wounds, and took care of the sick. But good night, good night, Neshdanof man, deserving to be pitied ! And you, officer, ha, cub, good night ! ”

He started toward the oasis. Markelof and Neshdanof directed their steps toward the inn where they had left the tarantass, had it harnessed, and half an hour later were rolling along the highway.

XXI.

THE sky was covered with low-hanging clouds ; it was not quite dark, and the ruts shone dimly in front of the carriage ; but on both sides all was wrapped in mist, and the outlines of the different objects melted into large, shapeless patches. It was a dull, unsettled night ; the wind blew in little, damp puffs, bringing the scent of rain and of vast wheat fields. When the carriage had passed a certain clump of oaks which served as a landmark, and they were obliged to take the cross-road, the traveling became still less comfortable, the narrow road at times entirely disappearing ; the coachman drove more slowly. " If we only don't get lost," said Neshdanof, who had till then remained silent.

" Don't be afraid of that," replied Markelof. " Two misfortunes never come in one day."

" And what was the first ? "

" The first ? Why, don't you consider the loss of a day as something ? "

" Yes, indeed ; that Goloushkine ! we ought not to have drunk so much. My head aches horribly."

" I was not thinking of Goloushkine. He at least gave us some money, so that our visit was not quite fruitless."

" Oh ! Then you are complaining of Pakline's taking us to see his inseparables, as he calls them."

" There was not much to regret in that or to be glad of. I am not one of the kind who are amused by such trifles. That was not the misfortune I meant."

" What was it then ? "

Markelof did not make any reply, and drew back into his corner of the carriage, as if to hide himself. Neshdanof could not distinguish his features ; his mustache, only, showed like a black line across his face ; but ever since

the morning something had been noticeable in Markelof which his companion shrank from investigating ; a sort of gloomy, secret irritation.

"Listen, Serge Michaelovitch," he said to him after a moment's silence. "Seriously, were you so very much pleased with that Mr. Kisliakof's letters? To me they seemed sheer nonsense, if you will excuse my saying so."

Markelof suddenly sat up straight.

"In the first place," said he angrily, "I in no way share your opinion of those letters ; I consider them very remarkable and conscientious. Moreover, Kisliakof works, he takes pains, and above all, he has faith. He believes in one work, he believes in re-vo-lu-tion ! And let me tell you, Alexis Dimitritch, I observe that *you*, you are luke-warm in regard to our work—you do not really believe in it."

"What makes you think that?" asked Neshdanof slowly.

"What makes me think that? Why, all you say—your whole manner. Who was it that said at Goloushkine's to-day that he did not see what elements there were that could be depended upon? You! Who asked if we could point out any such elements? You again! And when your friend Pakline—that clown, that buffoon—rolled up his eyes to heaven declaring that no one of us was capable of making a sacrifice, who upheld him? who nodded approval? Wasn't it you? Say and think of yourself what you please, that is your affair; for my part I know people who have had the courage to thrust away from them all that makes life beautiful, even the happiness of love itself, in order to carry out their ideas, and to remain faithful to their convictions. But you have naturally something quite different in your head to-day!"

"To-day? Why particularly to-day?"

"Oh, come! no shamming, happy Don Juan, myrtle crowned lover!" cried Markelof, completely forgetting the driver who could hear every word, although he did not turn his head.

At that moment the driver, it is true, was more concerned about the right road than about the quarrels of the gentlemen in behind him; he was trying with care, almost with timidity, to calm the shaft-horse, who was obstinately toss-

ing his head and rearing up on his hind legs ; the tarantass slipped on a rocky slope which ought not to have been there.

"I beg your pardon—I don't quite understand," said Neshdanof.

Markelof burst into a forced and bitter laugh.

"You don't understand. Ha ! ha ! ha ! But I know all about it, my dear sir. I know to whom you made your declaration of love yesterday evening ; I know whom you charmed by your imposing manner and your fine discourse ; I know who admits you into her room after ten o'clock in the evening."

"Master," said the coachman suddenly to Markelof, "will you please take the reins for a moment ? I will get down and see. I think we have come a little out of our way. There is a sort of hole here."

In fact, the tarantass did lean very much to one side.

Markelof took the reins which the driver handed to him, and continued, without lowering his voice :

"I do not blame you, Alexis Dimitritch. You profited by the occasion. That was your right. I only say that I am not surprised that you should cool off toward the common 'work.' I tell you again, you have something else in your head, and I venture this remark on my own account : Where is the man who could tell beforehand with any certainty what would please a young girl, or could guess what she wishes ?"

"I understand you now," began Neshdanof. "I understand your bitterness. I know who has played the spy upon us, and hastened to tell you."

But Markelof, without appearing to hear him, continued, dwelling on each word as if he were chanting :

"It is not a question of merit, or of extraordinary qualities—moral or physical—no ! It is merely the good luck, the cursed good luck of those damned bastards !"

Markelof pronounced the last words in a rapid, jerky way, then suddenly broke off as if turned to stone.

Neshdanof in the darkness felt his face grow pale and a cold shiver run over his cheeks. He made a violent effort to keep from springing at Markelof's throat.

He must have blood, blood, to wash out this insult !

"I have found the road again !" cried the coachman, who now made his appearance again near the right fore-wheel ; "I had made a little mistake, I took the turning to the left. But there is no harm done now. We shall be there in a minute ; it is only one verst to the house. Keep your seats."

He climbed up to the board which served him for a seat, took the reins from the hands of Markelof, and turned the shaft horse into the right road. The tarantass, at first violently shaken two or three times, rolled along at last quickly and smoothly on an even road. The shadows seemed to separate and grow less heavy. A little hill appeared in front of them ; a light shone, vanished, then another. A dog barked.

"There are the first cabins," said the coachman. "Come, my little cats ! Get up !"

The lights became more and more numerous.

"After such an insult," said Neshdanof at length, "you will easily understand, Mr. Markelof, that it will be impossible for me to pass the night beneath your roof ; I am, therefore, reluctantly obliged to beg you to lend me your tarantass to return to the town ; to-morrow I shall find a conveyance home, and you will receive a communication, such as you doubtless expect."

Markelof waited a moment before answering.

"Neshdanof," he said suddenly with a firm voice, but despairing accent, "Neshdanof, for heaven's sake, come into my house, were it only that I may ask your pardon on my knees ! Neshdanof, forget—forget my mad words ! Oh, if any one could understand how wretched I am !"

Markelof struck his chest such a blow with his fist that it seemed to groan.

"Neshdanof, be generous ! Give me your hand. Do not refuse to forgive me !"

Neshdanof held out his hand, not without some hesitation ; but he extended it. Markelof pressed it with such force that Neshdanof came near crying out with the pain.

The tarantass stopped before the front steps of Markelof's house.

"Listen, Neshdanof," said Markelof to his companion, a quarter of an hour later, in his dressing-room, "listen !"

He said only "thou" to him, and this sudden "thou"—addressed to the man in whom he had just found a successful rival, the man to whom he had just offered a deadly insult, whom he had wished to kill and tear in pieces—in this "thou" there was, at the same time, an absolute renunciation, a humble and sorrowful petition, and even a sort of claim. And that Neshdanof recognized this claim is proved by the fact that he also said "thou" to his companion.

"Listen ! I told^s you a short time ago that I had renounced the joys of love, that I had thrust them from me in order to consecrate myself wholly to my convictions. That was a lie, a vain boast ! I have never been offered anything of the sort, and I have never thrust it from me ! I was born unlucky and unlucky I have always been. Perhaps it was ordained so. I was not made for love. No doubt my mission is elsewhere. Since you can combine both things, loving, being loved in return, and at the same time serving the work— You are a lucky mortal ! I envy you. But I—no, I cannot ! You are happy, you are happy ! But I—I cannot—"

Markelof said all this in a low voice, sitting on a chair with his head bent forward and his arms hanging down.

Neshdanof was standing before him, in deep, dreamy attention, and though Markelof congratulated him on being happy, he did not feel at all so.

"In my youth a woman betrayed me," continued Markelof ; "she was an adorable young girl, but she deceived me ; for whom ? For a German ! an aide-de-camp ! And Marianne—"

He interrupted himself. This was the first time he had spoken her name and it seemed to burn his lips.

"Marianne did not deceive me, she told me in so many words that she did not love me. Why should she love me ? She had given herself to you. Oh, well, what of that ? Was she not free ?"

"But stop, stop !" cried Neshdanof. "What are you say-

ing? She has given herself to me? I do not know what your sister may have written, but I swear to you—”

“I do not say that! She has given herself to you morally, she has given you her heart, her soul!” interrupted Markelof, not without deriving secret comfort from Neshdanof’s exclamation. “And she has done well. As to my sister she certainly did not mean to pain me, or rather she did not care whether she pained me or not; but one thing is certain, and that is that she detests you, and Marianne too. She did not lie. Besides, let her do what she likes; I don’t care what she does!”

“Yes,” thought Neshdanof, “she detests us.”

“All is for the best,” resumed Markelof, without changing his position. “Now that the last ties are broken, nothing can trouble me more! You will tell me that Goloushkin is an idiot, that is possible. Kisliakof’s letters are ridiculous, that may be. But the important thing, what we must perceive, is that, according to his letters, everything is ready everywhere. You doubt that perhaps?”

Neshdanof did not answer.

“You are perhaps right; but if we wait till all is ready, absolutely everything, we shall never begin. If we always weigh in advance all the consequences of our actions we can’t fail to find some bad ones. For instance, when our predecessors were making ready for the emancipation of the serfs, could they foresee that one of the results of this emancipation would be the springing up of a class of usurers who charge the peasants six rubles for a *tchetver** of damaged wheat, and who receive in exchange,” Markelof bent one finger first, “at least six rubles’ worth of work; secondly,” Markelof bent another finger, “a whole *tchetver* of good wheat, and besides,” he bent another finger, “something more as interest? That is to say, they drain the last drop of the peasant’s blood. Could the emancipators however foresee that? And even if they had foreseen it, would they not still have done right to free the peasants, and not to consider all the results beforehand? That is why my resolution is taken.”

* *Tchetver*. About five and a half bushels.

Neshdanof fixed upon Markelof an astonished and questioning gaze, but he turned away his eyes. His frowning brow hid his eyes, he bit his lips and mustache.

"Yes, my resolution is taken!" he repeated, striking his knee violently with his brown, hairy fist. "I am an obstinate fellow. It is not for nothing that I am half a Little Russian."

Then he rose and shuffling his feet along as if he had not strength to lift them from the ground, he passed into his bed-chamber; whence he returned in a moment, carrying in his hand a little portrait of Marianne, framed under glass.

"Take this," he said, with a sad but calm voice. "It was I who made it. I am a poor draftsman, but look, I think it is like her." The portrait, a profile, drawn in pencil, was really very like her. "Take this, my friend, it is my last will and testament; with this portrait I give you, not my rights, for I have none, but everything, everything! I give to you all, and she—my friend, she is a good—"

Markelof stopped; his breast heaved visibly.

"Take it, you are no longer angry with me, are you? Well, take it then, I have no further need for anything of the sort."

Neshdanof took the portrait, but a strange feeling oppressed him. He felt as if he had no right to accept such a gift; that if Markelof could read what was passing in his heart, he would not, perhaps, give him this portrait. Neshdanof held in his hand the little bit of pasteboard, carefully framed with a black frame with a gilded edge, and asked himself what he should do with it.

"It is a man's whole life that I hold in my hand," he thought.

He understood what a cruel sacrifice Markelof was making at this moment; but why, why particularly for him? Should he give the portrait back to Markelof? No; that would have been a still more cruel injury—after all, this face was dear to him, he loved this woman!

Neshdanof then looked at Markelof, not without some dread; was he not watching him? was he not trying to

guess his thoughts? But Markelof was gnawing his mustache with still averted gaze.

The old servant came in with a candle in his hand.

Markelof started.

"It is time to go to sleep, my friend Alexis," cried he. "Things look different by daylight. To-morrow you shall have some horses and drive home again, so good-by!"

"Good-by to you too, old fellow!" he added suddenly to the servant, slapping him on the shoulder. "Don't you think unkindly of me either!"

The old man was so surprised that he almost dropped his candle, and the look which he fixed on his master had in it something unlike, something more than his habitual sadness.

Neshdanof withdrew to his chamber. He was not at all happy. The wine which he had drunk still made his head ache. There was a singing in his ears, and shadows passed before his eyes even when he shut them. Goloushchine, the clerk Vassia, Fomoushka, Fimoushka, whirled before him; the distant image of Marianne seemed afraid to approach, as if distrustful. All that he had himself said and done seemed to him lying and deceit, useless, sickening absurdity; and what he ought to have done, the end toward which one should tend, seemed hidden in some unknown, inaccessible place, under a triple lock, buried in the depths of the earth. And he felt an unceasing longing to get up to go to Markelof, and say to him, "Take back your present, take it back!"

"Pugh! what a disgusting thing life is!" he cried at last.

The next day he started early. Markelof was on the front steps surrounded by peasants. Had he called them or had they come of themselves? Neshdanof could not tell. Markelof bid him good-by in a dry, laconic fashion. However, he seemed to have something of very grave importance to say to the peasants. And the old servant was there as usual with his eternal mournful look.

The tarantass passed quickly through the town, and when it reached the country went at a good pace. The horses were the same as the evening before; but the driver,

whether because Neshdanof lived in a handsome house or for some other reason, counted on receiving a handsome *pourboire*, and as every one knows, when the coachman has had something good to drink or hopes to have something, the horses go like the wind.

The day, although somewhat fresh, was a real June day : white clouds were quickly sweeping across the blue sky ; the strong, steady wind raised no dust on the road, which had been well hardened by the rain of the night before ; the rustling willows waved and shone, everything was stirring and growing ; the cry of the quail on the distant hills came to them, across the green ravines, in clear, liquid notes which themselves seemed winged, as if they came by flying ; the raven's glossy plumage shone in the sun, and upon the line of the horizon there was something passing which looked like great black insects. These were the horses of the peasants, who were giving a second plowing to their fallow land.

But Neshdanof passed by all this without seeing it ; he did not even perceive when he had reached the Sipiagin's estate, so absorbed was he in his thoughts.

Nevertheless he trembled when they came in sight of the house, and he saw in the upper story the window of Marianne's room. " Yes," he said to himself, with a pleasant glow about his heart ; " he was right, she is a good girl, and I love her."

XXII.

HE went quickly to change his clothes, then he came down to give Kola his lesson. Sipiagin, whom he met in the dining-room, gave him a coldly polite bow, asked him with an air of indifference whether he had had a pleasant visit, and went into his study. The statesman had already decided in his ministerial mind that at the end of the vacation he would pack this young tutor back to Petersburg, for he was "really too red," and that meanwhile he would keep his eye on him. "I wasn't lucky this time," he said to himself; "but, after all, it might have been worse."

Mme. Sipiagin's feelings toward Neshdanof were much more lively and energetic. She could not endure him! Hadn't the fellow insulted her?

Marianne was right in thinking it was Mme. Sipiagin who was eavesdropping that evening in the hall—yes, that great lady was not above such devices. During the two days' absence of the young man she had not had any explanation with her "flighty" niece; but she gave her continually to understand that she knew everything, that she was no less indignant than surprised, and that her surprise would be greater, if it was not combined with some contempt and pity. Indeed, her lip was curled with ill-concealed contempt; she lifted her eyebrows with a sort of amused pity whenever she looked at Marianne or talked with her; her haughty eyes rested with indolent perplexity, and a sort of wearied disgust, on this foolish girl, who, after so many fancies and eccentricities, had at last kissed in a dark room the first student she happened to meet.

Poor Marianne! Her firm, proud lips had never yet submitted to a kiss.

Valentine Michailovna, did not however, tell her husband what she had found out; she confined herself to accompanying the few words she addressed to Marianne in

Sipiagin's presence with a meaning smile which had no connection with what she was saying.

It even happened at odd moments that she was a little sorry she had written to her brother. But, on the whole, she preferred being sorry, and having written, to not being sorry and not having written.

Neshdanof saw Marianne for only a moment, in the dining-room, after breakfast. He found her grown pale and wan; she by no means looked her best that day, but the quick glance she threw at him as he came in went straight to his heart.

As for Mme. Sipiagin, she looked at him as if she were saying to herself, "Bravo! capital! very well done!" And at the same time she tried to make out from his expression whether Markelof had shown him her letter. She finally decided that he had.

Sipiagin, when he heard that Neshdanof had visited the mill, of which Solomine was superintendent, began to ask him about "that industrial establishment which was so interesting from all points of view," but the young man's answers soon showed him that he had not seen anything, and he relapsed into majestic silence, as if he was vexed with himself for expecting any serious information from so immature a youth.

As they were leaving the dining-room, Marianne had an opportunity to whisper to Neshdanof:

"Go and wait for me in the birch grove, at the end of the garden; I'll join thee as soon as I can."

"She, too, says 'thou,'" thought Neshdanof. "How sweet and unexpected, pleasant and strange!" Yet it would have seemed impossible that she should not have done so.

He felt that this would have been a real unhappiness to him. Was he in love with this young girl? He did not at all know, but he felt with his whole being that she had become dear to him—and intimate—and necessary—necessary, above all.

The grove where Marianne had told him to go was composed of a hundred large old birch trees, principally weeping birches. The wind was still blowing steadily and strongly; the long tufts of slender branches swayed and waved like floating tresses of hair; the distant clouds were

still passing swiftly across the blue sky ; when one of them passed over the sun everything became, not dark, but of uniform tint. But the cloud would quickly pass, and all around him at once brilliant patches of light would begin to quiver tumultuously, meeting, separating, mingling together. The sound and movement remained as before, but there was added an appearance of joy and of festivity. It is with this same joyous violence that passion penetrates into a darkened and troubled heart. And such a heart Neshdanof carried in his breast.

He leaned standing against the trunk of a birch and waited. He did not know just what he felt, nor did he wish to know ; he was at the same time more disturbed and yet more at ease than when at Markelof's. He wished above all to see her, to speak to her ; he became conscious of that tie which suddenly unites two living beings. Neshdanof thought of the rope which is thrown ashore as a steamer approaches the wharf. Then it is drawn round a post, and the boat stops. It has reached port ! God be thanked !

Suddenly he trembled. A woman's dress appeared at a distance in the path. It was she. But was she walking toward or away from him ? He could not tell which at first, then he noticed that the patches of light and shadow ran *up* her dress, she must be coming toward him, they would have run *down* if she had been going away. Some moments more and she was close to him, before him, with her bright, friendly face, a caressing brilliancy in her eyes, a light but gay smile playing about her lips. He seized the hands she held out to him, his voice failed him, she also said nothing. Her quick walk had put her out of breath, but her look showed that she was glad that he was so rejoiced to see her.

She first broke silence.

"Well," she said, "tell me quickly what has been decided."

Neshdanof looked surprised.

"Decided ? we have decided nothing so soon as this."

"Oh ! you understand me well enough. Tell me what you talked about. Whom did you see ? Did you make

Solomine's acquaintance? Tell me everything, everything! But wait, let us first come this way. I know a place where we shall be less in sight."

She led him, and he followed her obediently across the tall, dry, stiff grass.

She led him to a spot where a large birch tree lay, thrown down by some storm. They sat down on its trunk.

"Come, tell me!" she repeated.

But she immediately added:

"Oh! how glad I am to see you! It seemed as if these two days would never end. Do you know that I am certain that Mme. Sipiagin overheard us?"

"She wrote to Markelof about it," said Neshdanof.

"To him?"

Marianne stopped speaking, and little by little her face became red, not with embarrassment, but with another and stronger emotion.

"The bad, mischief-making woman!" she murmured slowly; "she had no right to do that. But bah! what difference does it make? Come, tell me everything!"

Neshdanof began his tale. She listened silently, as if deeply interested, only interrupting him when he hurried or passed over the details. The incidents were not equally interesting to her, however; Fomoushka and Fimoushka made her laugh, but interested her little; their way of life was too far removed from her ideas.

"It is as if you were telling me about Nebuchadnezzar," she said, when he was telling her about them.

But what Markelof said, even what Goloushchine thought (although she at once understood what sort of a creature he was), and above all what Solomine's opinions were, and what kind of man he was, these were the things she wished to know, and which interested her intensely.

"But when are you going to act?"

When? This was the question which was constantly upon her lips and in her mind, while Neshdanof was talking. And as for him, he seemed to avoid everything which could in any way answer this question. He finally, himself, perceived that just those details upon which he dwelt

the most, interested Marianne the least, and that he kept returning to them in spite of himself.

His humorous descriptions bored Marianne ; his sad, unenthusiastic way of speaking pained her. She only wished to hear about the "work," the "question." No discourse upon this subject seemed tedious to her. Neshdanof was reminded of the time, before he was a student, when he passed a summer with some friends in the country ; he used to tell stories to their children, and they also appreciated neither descriptions nor purely personal impressions ; they also demanded active deeds ! Marianne was not a child, but she had the pure and simple impressions of one.

Neshdanof praised Markelof warmly and sincerely, and spoke of Solomine with the greatest appreciation. In the middle of his enthusiastic description, he asked himself on what he based the high opinion he had formed of this man. Solomine had not said anything especially remarkable, some of his words were in fact directly opposed to Neshdanof's convictions.

"He has a well-balanced character," he said to himself ; "that's it ; he is exact, steady, fresh, as Fimoushka said ; he is a man, a tranquil, solid force ; he knows what he wants and has confidence in himself, and he awakens confidence in others ; he is never disturbed ; equilibrium, equilibrium ! that is the important thing, and that is just what I lack."

Neshdanof interrupted himself and remained plunged in his reflections.

Suddenly he felt the touch of a hand on his shoulder.

He raised his head. Marianne's eyes were fixed on him with a tender solicitude.

"My friend, what is the matter ?"

He took the hand that lay on his shoulder and kissed for the first time this little hand, that was at the same time pretty and strong. Marianne laughed gayly, as if astonished that it had occurred to him to pay her such a pretty attention. Then in her turn she became pensive.

"Did Markelof show you Mme. Sipiagin's letter ?" she asked at length.

"Yes."

"And—what did he say?"

"He? He is generosity, self-sacrifice itself. He—"

Neshdanof was going to speak to Marianne of the portrait, but he checked himself, and contented himself with repeating, "He is generosity personified."

"Oh! Yes, yes!"

Marianne again became thoughtful, then suddenly turning toward Neshdanof, she said quickly:

"Well, then—what have you decided?"

Neshdanof shrugged his shoulders.

"But I told you there is nothing decided as yet; we must wait awhile."

"Wait awhile? Wait for what?"

"The latest instructions (I know well enough that I lie," thought Neshdanof).

"From whom?"

"From—you know—Vassili Nicholaïvitch. And then we must also await Ostrodumof's return."

Marianne looked at Neshdanof with a questioning air.

"Tell me, did you ever see this Vassili Nicholaïvitch?"

"I have seen him twice—for a moment."

"Well—is he a remarkable man?"

"How can I tell you? He is our chief, and directs everything; without discipline the work could not advance; we must know how to obey. (All that is also nothing but mere talk," thought Neshdanof once more.)

"How does he look?"

"He is short, thick-set, and has a dark complexion; he has a harsh face, with prominent eyeballs—a Tartar face—but with very lively eyes."

"How does he talk?"

"He commands rather than talks."

"And why is he the chief?"

"He is a man of strong will. He yields to none. He would kill any one, if it were necessary. In short, they are afraid of him."

"And what is Solomine like?" asked Marianne, after a moment.

"Solomine is not handsome either; but he has an excellent face, simple and loyal looking—one meets with such

heads among the divinity students—the good ones I mean, of course.”

Neshdanof gave a detailed description of Solomine. Marianne looked at Neshdanof for a long, long time. Then, as if speaking to herself :

“You have a good face too. I think life spent with you would be easy.”

These words touched Neshdanof, who took her hand again as if about to raise it to his lips.

“You are too polite,” Marianne said smilingly. She always smiled when her hand was kissed. “You don’t know,” she went on, “that I have to apologize to you.”

“For what?”

“Why, while you were away, I went into your room, and saw upon your table a little volume of poetry”—Neshdanof trembled, for he remembered that he had in fact left the little book on his table—“and I confess that I could not overcome my curiosity, and I read it. They are your verses, are they not?”

“Yes; and you know now, Marianne, what proves better than anything else could, how much I am attached to you, and how much I trust you. I am hardly angry with you for this.”

“Hardly? Then you are, a little? But now I want you to call me by my name. I can never call you Neshdanof. I shall call you Alexis. And that little poem beginning

‘Dear friend, when I am dying,’

is that yours, too?”

“Yes, yes. But please don’t speak of it again. Don’t torment me.”

Marianne shook her head.

“That is a very sad poem. I hope you wrote it before we met. But the verses are excellent, so far as I can judge. I think you could become a writer. But I am sure that you have something to do better and higher than that of a mere writer. Writing was an excellent thing once, so long as there was nothing else to be done.”

Neshdanof glanced at her quickly.

"You mean—? Yes, 'tis true. Better to fail in this, than to succeed in that."

Marianne suddenly rose to her feet with warmth.

"Yes, my friend, you are right," she cried, and her face, which was beautiful in its generous emotion, kindled with enthusiasm. "You are right. But perhaps we shall not fail after all. We are young. You shall see how useful we can be. Our life shall not have been spent in vain. We shall join with the people. You know some trade, don't you? No? Never mind. We shall find something to do. We will offer to them, to our brothers, all that we can do. If need be, I will cook, sew, wash. You shall see, you shall see. And there will be no goodness in this, but happiness, happiness!"

Marianne grew silent, but her look, fixed on the distant scene—not upon the one that spread before her, but upon another far off in the future, invisible to all but her—her look was burning.

Neshdanof bent over toward her, almost upon his knees.

"Oh, Marianne," he murmured, "I am not worthy of you."

She started suddenly.

"I must go at once," she cried, "or else they will be sending some one to look for us again. Though for that matter I believe Mme. Sipiagin has given up busying herself about me. In her eyes, I am an abandoned creature."

Marianne, as she pronounced these words, had upon her face such an expression of joy that Neshdanof, gazing into the young girl's eyes, could not keep from smiling as he repeated, "An abandoned creature."

"But she is dreadfully offended," continued Marianne, "because you're not at her feet. But that's of no importance; listen. Of course I cannot remain here. We must fly!"

"We—fly?"

"Yes. You do not wish to remain here any longer, do you? We will go away together. We must travel together. You will come with me?"

"To the end of the world!" cried Neshdanof, and his

voice suddenly vibrated with emotion, a hearty gratitude. "To the end of the world !"

At that moment, in fact, he would have gone with her, without looking behind, no matter where she led him.

Marianne knew this ; she gave a brief but happy sigh.

"Now, take my hand—only do not kiss it—and press it firmly, like a comrade, a friend—this way."

They returned together to the house silent, calm, content. The young grass touched their feet lightly. The budding leaves rustled all around them. Flecks of shadow and of sunshine played hide and seek upon their clothes, and both smiled at this rapid and ever changing sport of the light, at the merry gusts of wind, at the glittering freshness of the foliage, and at their own youth—and at one another.

XXIII.

THE dawn had already begun to break, when Solomine, having easily walked his five versts after dining with Goloushchine, knocked at the little door in the high wall which surrounded the factory.

The night-watchman opened it for him at once, and, accompanied by three enormous watch-dogs, who wagged their shaggy tails without ceasing, led him to his room with marked respect.

"You have got back early, Mr. Solomine. We did not expect you until morning."

"Bah ! it's pleasanter walking by night."

The relations that existed between Solomine and his workmen were pleasant, although a little out of the ordinary way. The workmen respected him as a superior, but treated him as an equal, as one of themselves. In their eyes he was a man who knew his business very well.

"When Vassili Fedotoff says anything," they would say to one another, "it is sacred, because he is a famous scholar, and he beats all the *Aglitchas*" (English).

The workmen remembered that a great English manufacturer had come one day to visit the factory, and, whether it was because Solomine spoke English, or out of real respect for his knowledge, this Englishman patted Solomine several times upon the shoulder, asked him laughingly if he would like to come with him to Liverpool, and then turning to the workmen, said in his broken Russian, "She good man, oh, very good man !" This made the workmen laugh heartily, and they said, not without pride :

"Ah, our superintendent is hard to beat, and he is one of us !"

The next morning Solomine was awakened by his favorite Paul, who, as he helped him dress, told him the news and

asked after his budget. They then took a cup of tea together hurriedly, and Solomine, having drawn on his old work jacket, went down to the factory, and his life began anew to turn as regularly as the wheel of a machine.

But another interruption was in store for him.

Five days after his return, Solomine saw entering the courtyard of the factory an elegant carriage drawn by four superb horses, and immediately a lackey in gray livery, introduced by Paul, handed him solemnly a sealed letter, bearing the coat of arms of "His Excellency, General Sipiagin."

In this letter, all impregnated, not with perfume—that would be too common—but with a peculiar English scent as marked as it was disagreeable—in this letter, written in the third person, it is true, but with his own proud hand, the noble lord of the domain of Arjanoie, apologizing first for addressing a man to whom he was personally unknown, but of whom he, Sipiagin, had heard the most flattering praises, took the "liberty" of inviting to his house Mr. Solomine, whose counsel might be of the greatest use to him upon the subject of an important industrial enterprise; and in the hope that Mr. Solomine would have the goodness to accept his invitation, he had sent his carriage for him. In case, however, that Mr. Solomine should find it impossible to absent himself to-day, he begged him to appoint some other day, at his convenience, and then he, Sipiagin, would gladly place his carriage at Mr. Solomine's disposal. Then came the customary formula, followed by his signature with an elegant flourish, quite worthy of a minister, and it is scarcely necessary to add, absolutely undecipherable to any but the initiated.

The letter ended with a postscript, this time in the first person.

"I trust that you will not refuse to come to dinner without ceremony, and in your morning dress."

The words "without ceremony" were underlined.

Accompanying this letter, the gray-liveried lackey, not without some hesitation, handed to Solomine an ordinary note, not even sealed. This note, written by Neshdanof, contained only these words:

"Come, I beseech you. We need you very much here, and you can render a great service—but not, I need scarcely say, to Mr. Sipiagin."

After reading Sipiagin's letter, Solomine thought to himself :

"Well, I should hardly go any other way than without ceremony. I never had a dress-coat in my life. But why the deuce should I go poking over there? I should only lose my time."

But when he had opened Neshdanof's note, he scratched his neck, and walked to the window, unable to make up his mind.

"What reply will you deign to send?" asked the gray-liveried lackey respectfully.

Solomine stood at the window a moment, then at last tossing back his hair, and passing his hands over his forehead, he replied :

"I will go. Give me time to change my clothes."

The lackey went out with a dignified step. Solomine called Paul, spoke with him, and ran again to the factory. When he had put on a black coat with much too long a tail, and which had been cut by a tailor's apprentice, and had put upon his head a somewhat rusty tall hat, which gave him a very stiff appearance, he got into the carriage; then suddenly remembering that he had not taken any gloves, he called the omnipresent Paul, who ran to fetch him a pair of buckskin gloves that had been recently washed, so that every finger had swollen at the end, and looked like a biscuit.

Solomine stuffed the gloves into his pocket, and bade them drive on. Immediately the lackeys, with an energy as unexpected as it was useless, leaped upon the box, the well-trained coachman uttered a shrill cry to start the horses, and the carriage moved away.

While Solomine was rolling on toward Sipiagin's abode, that statesman was sitting in his parlor with a political pamphlet, half cut, upon his knees, talking with his wife about the young manufacturer. He had written to him, he told his wife, for the purpose of persuading him to leave the Moscow merchant's mill, and take charge of his own,

which was going from bad to worse, and which ought to be completely reorganized.

Sipiagin never imagined for a moment that the young man might refuse to come, or even that he would put off his visit to another day, although in his letter he had left him his choice.

"But ours is a paper mill, and he has charge of a cotton mill," observed Mme. Sipiagin.

"That makes no difference, my dear. There is machinery there as here. And Solomine is a mechanician."

"But how do you know but what he's a specialist?"

"My dear, in Russia there are no specialists. And besides, I repeat, he is a mechanician."

Mme. Sipiagin smiled.

"Be prudent, my dear. You have already come to grief with young people. Take care that it does not happen again."

"You are alluding to Neshdanof! After all I think I have attained my purpose even there. As an assistant for Kola he is perfect. And then, you know, *non bis in idem*! Pardon my pedantry—I mean that the same thing never happens twice."

"You think so? For my part, I think in this world everything is repeated, above all everything in the nature of things, and especially among young people."

"What do you mean?" asked Sipiagin, throwing the pamphlet upon the table.

"Open your eyes, and you will see?" she replied.

"Hum!" said Sipiagin; "do you mean our little student?"

"Precisely, our student."

"Hum! He has been fancying something new?" tapping his forehead with his fingers.

"Open your eyes!"

"Marianne? Eh?"

This second "Eh?" was said in more of a nasal tone than the first.

"Open your eyes, I tell you."

Sipiagin frowned.

"Very good. But we'll clear this matter up later. Now,

I wish to say a word to you. Very probably this Solomine will be a little frightened—very naturally—he is unused to it. We must be very gentle, so as not to scare him. I don't say this on your account. You are a pearl, and when you wish you can bewitch people with a glance. *J'en sais quelquechose, madame.* But I mean it regarding the others—him, for instance.”

He pointed with his finger to a gray hat of the latest style, placed on a stand ; it belonged to Kallomeïtsef, who had arrived at Arjanoie that morning.

“He's very abrupt, you know. He absolutely despises the people—a feeling I condemn absolutely. Besides, for some time I have noticed that he seemed irritated, and inclined to abuse everything. Is it because his affairs over there—” Sipiagin made a motion with his head—a vague sort of sign, but his wife understood it—“are doing badly? Eh?”

“Open your eyes, I tell you.”

Sipiagin drew himself up.

“Eh?” This “Eh?” was spoken in a very different tone—one much lower than before. “Ah, bah! It may happen that I shall open them a little too wide. They had better take care.”

“That's your affair. But now as to your new young man. If he arrives to-day you may rest easy, every precaution shall be taken.”

It turned out that the precautions were wholly unnecessary, Solomine was neither alarmed nor abashed.

When the servant announced him, Sipiagin arose at once, and cried in a loud voice, so as to be heard in the ante-chamber, “Show him in—of course show him in.”

Then he walked toward the door of the parlor, and stopped near it. Solomine had scarcely crossed the threshold when Sipiagin, whom he had nearly run against, held out both his hands, and holding his head first on one side and then on the other, with an amiable smile, said as if delighted, “Ah, how kind this is of you! How can I thank you?”

And then he immediately led him to Mme. Sipiagin.

“This is my wife,” said he, placing his hand gently upon

Solomine's back, as if to push him toward his wife. "My dear, let me present to you the leading machinist and leading manufacturer of this district, Vassili"—he hesitated—"Fedoceivitch Solomine."

Mme. Sipiagin arose slightly, raised her beautiful eyelids gracefully, smiled upon the young man with a simple air, as if to an old acquaintance, then offered him her little hand, the palm uppermost, the elbow pressed against her body, her head bent slightly to one side, as if she were asking for a little charity.

Solomine gave the husband and wife time to finish their little ceremonies, shook the hands of both, and sat down as soon as he was asked.

Sipiagin then inquired anxiously if he would not take something. But the young man replied that he wanted nothing, that he was in no way fatigued by his journey, and that he was entirely at their disposal.

"Might I ask then if you are willing to visit the factory?" asked Sipiagin with the air of one who feared being indiscreet, and who scarcely dared hope for such a favor from his guest.

"Immediately, if you would like," replied Solomine.

"Ah, how obliging you are! Shall I have them harness a droshki, or perhaps you would prefer going on foot?"

"Your factory, I suppose, is not very far off?"

"Half a verst, at the most."

"Why should we drive then?"

"Very well. My hat and cane, quick. Come, my little housekeeper, quick—my hat."

Sipiagin was far more uneasy than his guest. He repeated again, "Now, then, my hat," and he, a great dignitary, jumped about like a noisy school-boy.

While her husband was talking with Solomine, Mme. Sipiagin had been watching secretly but carefully the "new young man."

He was sitting quietly in an arm-chair, with his two bare hands placed upon his knees (he had evidently not put on his gloves), and was examining tranquilly, but with curiosity, the furniture and the pictures.

"What does this mean?" thought she. "He is a plebeian,

a true plebeian, and yet what unaffected manners he has ! ”

In fact, Solomine was very unaffected, not at all like those who, while they force themselves to appear natural, really desire that they should be noticed, but like a man whose thoughts and feelings are very simple but very powerful.

Mme. Sipiagin wished to open a conversation, but to her great surprise she could hardly find a thing to say.

“ Can it be,” she thought, “ that I’m overawed by this machinist ? ”

“ My husband,” she began at last, “ ought to be very grateful to you for the precious time that you are sacrificing for his sake.”

“ It is not very precious, madame,” he replied, “ and then I am here for but a moment.”

“ The bear shows his claws,” thought she in French.

At that moment her husband reappeared upon the sill of the open door—a hat on his head, a stick in his hand. Turning half around, he said with an indifferent air :

“ Vassili Fedoceivitch, I am at your service.”

Solomine arose, bowed to the lady, and followed Sipiagin.

“ This way—follow me—this way,” repeated Sipiagin, as if they were in an untrodden forest, and Solomine needed a guide.

“ Look out now ; there are steps here, Vassili Fedoceivitch.”

“ When you call me by my first name,” said Solomine without hurrying, “ remember that it is not Fedoceivitch, but Fedotitch.”

Sipiagin looked at him over his shoulder with a sort of terror.

“ Ah ! I ask your pardon, Vassili Fedotitch.”

“ Oh, it’s of no consequence.”

Just as they were going out of the house, Kallomeitself met them.

“ Where are you going ? ” he asked of Sipiagin, looking askance at Solomine. “ To the factory ? Is this the individual in question ? ” he added in French.

Sipiagin opened his eager eyes, and shook his head slightly to insure prudence.

"Yes, to the factory. To show my sins and wickednesses to this machinist. Permit me to introduce to you Mr. Kallomeitsef, a proprietor of our neighborhood, Mr. Solomine."

Kallomeitsef gave an almost imperceptible nod or two of his head, without turning toward Solomine, or even looking at him. Solomine, on the other hand, looked steadfastly at Kallomeitsef, and a peculiar something passed over his half-closed eyes.

"May I go with you?" asked Kallomeitsef. "You know that I like to be instructed."

"Certainly."

They went out from the courtyard into the road. They had hardly gone twenty steps, when they saw the parish priest, who, with cassock turned back, was returning to the parsonage. Kallomeitsef left the group, hastened with firm and rapid steps toward the priest, who was much surprised and seemed a little embarrassed, asked his blessing, pressed upon his red, moist hand a resounding kiss, and turning toward Solomine, threw him a taunting glance. Evidently he had some knowledge of the new-comer; he wished to give a lesson to this rustic, whom everybody said was so learned.

"Is this a manifestation, my dear friend?" said Sipiagin from between his teeth.

Kallomeitsef turned up his nose.

"Yes, my dear friend, a manifestation that is very necessary in these times."

When they arrived at the factory they were met by a Little Russian with an immense beard and false teeth, who had replaced the German attendant. This Little Russian was there only provisionally. He seemed absolutely incompetent. He did nothing but say all the time, "See there!" and "If it please God," and sigh perpetually.

The inspection of the factory began. Many of the workmen knew Solomine by sight, and bowed to him. He even spokè to one of them.

"Ah, good day, Gregory—you here?" He was not long

in finding out that the business was badly managed. A great deal of money had been spent, but without discretion. The machines were of a bad make. Many of them were useless and superfluous, while many very necessary things were lacking.

Sipiagin looked at him constantly straight in the face to ascertain his opinion, and questioned him timidly. He asked him if he thought it was in good order.

"The order is all right," replied Solomine. "But does it yield a revenue? I doubt it."

Sipiagin and even Kallomeïtsef felt that the young man was perfectly at home in the factory, that he was familiar with everything, even to the smallest detail. He placed his hand upon a machine, as a horseman places his upon the neck of his steed; he touched a wheel with his fingers' end, and the wheel stopped or began again to turn; he took from the vat, in the hollow of his hand, a little of the pulp from which the paper was made, and immediately the pulp betrayed its every defect.

He scarcely spoke; he did not even look at the attendant, the Little Russian. He left the factory without saying a word. Sipiagin and Kallomeïtsef walked behind him.

Sipiagin allowed no one to accompany him. He even stamped his feet, and ground his teeth.

"I see by your manner," he said at last to the young man, "that you are not pleased with my establishment, and I know very well myself that it is not in good condition, that it is in a very bad state; but tell me exactly—I beseech you, without ceremony—what are its principal defects, and what ought to be done to correct them."

"Paper-making is not my trade," replied Solomine; "all that I can say is that industrial establishments are not the things for gentlemen."

"You look upon such occupations as humiliating to gentlemen?" asked Kallomeïtsef.

"Oh, no, not at all. What is there humiliating in them? Still, even if there were, the nobility would not be fit for them."

"What? How?"

"I would simply say," continued Solomine quietly, "that noblemen are not accustomed to that sort of occupation. To succeed in it, it is necessary to have the true commercial spirit, to look at everything from a new point of view. You must have persistence and patience. Noblemen seldom understand these conditions. Do we not see this always and everywhere? They build factories for cloth, paper, cotton, and into whose hands do these finally fall? Into the hands of the merchants. It is too bad, for merchants are nothing but leeches. But it can't be helped."

"According to you, then," cried Kallomeitsef, "we noblemen are not capable of understanding questions of finance?"

"Oh, on the contrary—the nobility are masters in finance—of a certain sort. For petitioning for and obtaining grants for railways, for organizing banks, for obtaining monopolies, and all that follows, no one surpasses the nobility. It was to that that I alluded, when you took the trouble to get angry. But I am speaking of the regular business enterprises: opening taverns, retail shops, loaning grain or money to the peasants on interest at one hundred or five hundred per cent., as so many of our noble proprietors are doing at this moment; these, in my opinion, are not financial operations in the true sense of the word."

Kallomeitsef made no reply. He belonged to precisely this new race of usurious proprietors—of whom Markelof had spoken in his last interview with Neshdanof—and he was the more inhuman in his demands, as he never dealt directly with the peasants (to whom admittance to his perfumed study was of course forbidden), but communicated with them only through the intervention of a clerk.

As he listened to the remarks which the young man let fall from his lips slowly, and with apparent indifference, he fumed inwardly, but for the time he kept silence, and the play in the muscles of his cheeks, caused by the convulsive pressure of his jaws, alone betrayed what was passing within.

"But allow me—allow me, Mr. Solomine," replied Sipagin: "all that you have said was perfectly true in the

past, when noblemen enjoyed entirely different rights, when they found themselves in a different situation. But now, after all the beneficent reforms which have been accomplished in our busy era, why cannot noblemen turn their attention, their capacities, in short, to such enterprises? Why should they not be capable of understanding what a simple, and sometimes illiterate, merchant understands? They certainly do not lack intellectual development, and one may even affirm, with almost absolute certainty, that they are, to a certain point, the representatives of civilization and of progress."

Sipiagin spoke very well. His eloquence might have had a great success, no matter where, at St. Petersburg, in the presence of the ministry, or even higher still, but it produced not the slightest impression upon Solomine.

"Noblemen cannot manage this sort of thing," he repeated once more.

"But why not? why not?" almost shouted Kallomeïtsef.

"Because the noblemen are the true employees, the *tchinovniks*."

"The *tchinovniks*?"

Kallomeïtsef wore a caustic, malicious sneer.

"Will you not be likely to be called to account, Mr. Solomine, for what you have said?"

Solomine continued to smile.

"Why do you think that, Mr. Kolomentsof?" (Kallomeïtsef started at hearing his name thus "mutilated"). "Rest assured that I am always ready to render my account."

"Then explain what you mean by that expression."

"This is what I mean. From my point of view, every *tchinovnik* is, and always will be, a stranger, an intruder; and the noblemen, as a matter of fact, have become strangers and intruders."

Kallomeïtsef laughed in the heartiest manner.

"Pray excuse me, my dear sir, but I don't understand a word of all this you are advancing."

"So much the worse for you. Try hard—and perhaps you will understand."

"Sir!"

“Gentlemen, gentlemen!” Sipiagin again hastened to say, seeming to seek for some one that he could not find, “I beg of you—please, Kallomeïtsef, I beg of you calm yourself. Dinner must be ready. Follow me, I beg of you, gentlemen.”

Five minutes after, Kallomeïtsef, entering like a bomb-shell into Mme. Sipiagin’s boudoir, cried out :

“Valentine Michaelovna ! If you only knew what your husband has done ! One Nihilist he introduced into your house, and here he has brought another. And this one is even worse than the first !”

“Why so ?”

“Why ? He has been setting forth Heaven knows what opinions ; and besides that—think of it !—he spoke for a whole hour with your husband, and never once addressed him as ‘Your Excellency.’ The vagabond !”

XXIV.

AFTER dinner, Sipiagin called his wife into his study. He wanted to speak with her alone.

He confided to her the sad condition of the factory ; he added that Solomine appeared to be an intelligent man, though somewhat—talkative !—and they must continue to pay him a little attention.

“ Ah, if we could only tempt him here, what a stroke of business it would be,” he repeated twice.

Sipiagin was much annoyed at Kallomeïtsef’s presence.

“ Devil take him ! he sees Nihilists everywhere, and he thinks only how he shall exterminate them. I wish he would exterminate them at home. He is not able to hold his tongue.”

Mme. Sipiagin observed that she should ask nothing better than to pay little attentions to the new visitor ; but that he seemed to stand in very little need of them, and that he did not seem to care for them at all. Not that he was rude, but he was indifferent to everything, a very astonishing thing on the part of a man of the people.

“ Never mind—do your best, please,” said Sipiagin.

Mme. Sipiagin promised to do her best, and she kept her word. She had an interview at once with Kallomeïtsef. No one knew what she said to him, but he sat down at table with the air of a man who had resolved to remain calm and discreet whatever he might hear.

This air of determined resignation gave him a slight tinge of melancholy, but then the dignity that there was in his every motion !

Mme. Sipiagin presented Solomine to every person in the house (he looked at Marianne more attentively than at the others), and she had him sit at her right hand at the dinner table. Kallomeïtsef was at her left. As he unfolded his

napkin, he half closed his eyes, and smiled, as if he would say, "Come, gentlemen, let us play out our comedy."

Sipiagin sat opposite, and watched him with some anxiety.

In consequence of the new disposition of seats, Neshdanof was no longer near Marianne. He was placed between Sipiagin and Anna Zakharovna.

Marianne found her card (it was a ceremonious dinner) upon the napkin between Kallomeïtsef and Kola.

The dinner was handsomely served. There was even put before each plate a *menu* written upon a little illuminated sheet of paper.

Immediately after the soup, Sipiagin turned the conversation to his factory, and upon the industrial production of Russia in general. Solomine, as usual, replied in very brief sentences. When he began to speak Marianne fastened her eyes upon him. Kallomeïtsef, who was sitting next her, made some polite remarks to her (to avoid engaging in the conversation as he had promised), but she did not listen to him. However, he uttered his compliments without feeling them, merely to salve his conscience, being very sure that between this young girl and himself there was an abyss that was not to be passed.

As for Neshdanof, something worse still lay between him and the master of the house. Sipiagin considered him henceforth as a mere piece of furniture, or as empty space. He had positively forgotten his very existence ! This new position had established itself so quickly and so completely that when Neshdanof said a few words during dinner in reply to a remark of Anna's, Sipiagin turned his head with astonishment, as if he was about to ask where those sounds came from.

Evidently Sipiagin possessed some of the qualities which especially distinguish our loftiest Russian dignitaries.

After the fish, Valentine, who had lavished all her graces and fascinations upon her right-hand neighbor, that is upon Solomine, said in English to her husband across the table :

"Our guest does not drink wine ; perhaps he would take some beer."

Sipiagin hastened to order "some ale !"

But Solomine, turning quietly toward Valentine, said :

"Madame, you are probably not aware that I passed more than two years in England, and that I understand and speak English. I tell you this in case you desire to say anything secretly before me."

Valentine hastened to assure him, with a laugh, that the precaution was useless, for he would have heard nothing but good of himself. In the depths of her heart, she felt that this conduct of Solomine's was a little strange, but exceedingly delicate in its manner.

Kallomeïtsef was unable to restrain himself longer.

"You have been in England," he began, "and you are doubtless acquainted with the customs of the country. Allow me to ask you if you think them worthy of imitation?"

"Upon certain points, yes ; on others, no."

"Short and sweet," replied Kallomeïtsef, refusing to see the signals made to him by Sipiagin. "You were speaking of the nobility just now—you had occasion, I suppose, to study those whom the English call their 'landed gentry.'"

"No, I had not the opportunity ; I lived in a wholly different sphere, but I have formed my opinion about those gentlemen."

"Well, do you think it impossible that such a race of landed gentry could exist here, and that in any case it might be desirable?"

"I think, to tell the truth, that it is impossible, and moreover that it would be very undesirable."

"Why so, my dear Mr. Solomine?"

This "dear Mr. Solomine" was thrown in to reassure Sipiagin, who seemed to be very restless, and was moving uneasily in his chair.

"Because within twenty or thirty years your 'landed gentry' will disappear."

"Permit me, my dear sir," continued Kallomeïtsef, "but what makes you think that?"

"I will tell you. The land will then belong to proprietors, without regard to their birth."

"To the merchants?"

"The greater part, without doubt, to the merchants."

"And in what way will this come about?"

"Simply because the merchants will buy the land."

"From the noblemen?"

"From the noblemen."

Kallomeïtsef smiled with a condescending air.

"You said the same thing, if my memory serves me, apropos of the factories and industrial establishments. And now you say it of the entire soil?"

"And now I say it of the entire soil."

"And you will be delighted at such a result, I suppose?"

"Not the least in the world. I told you just now the people will be none the happier for it."

Kallomeïtsef raised his hand slightly, as if to say, "What solicitude for the people!"

"Monsieur Solomine!" cried Sipiagin as loud as he could, "they have brought you some beer. Come, Simon," he added, in a low tone.

But Kallomeïtsef was fairly launched.

"I see," he continued, again addressing Solomine, "that you have no very favorable opinion of the merchants, but they have their origin in the people."

"Perfectly true."

"I thought that everything pertaining to the people, however distantly, seemed perfect in your eyes."

"Oh, no, sir. You are greatly mistaken in thinking that. Our people merit reproach in many ways, although they are not always to blame. Our merchants, up to the present time, are sharpers. They carry on their business like sharpers. What's to be done? They have been fleeced; they fleece in their turn. As to the people—"

"Well, as to the people?" repeated Kallomeïtsef, in a sharp tone.

"They are sleeping."

"And you would awaken them?"

"It would not be such a bad thing."

"Ah, that's what you are at!"

"Allow me, allow me," interposed Sipiagin in an imperative voice. He saw that the time had come to interpose a barrier, and he interposed it. Leaning the elbow of his right arm upon the table, and waving the hand of this arm

in the air to the right and then to the left, he delivered a long and very ministerial discourse. In the first place, he praised the Conservatives ; then he expressed his approval of the Liberals, according a slight preference to the latter, with whom he declared he sided. He extolled the people, but not without pointing out their weaknesses ; he expressed entire confidence in the government, but asked if all the underlings conformed to its fostering intentions. He proclaimed the use and importance of literature, but he observed that moderation should be the *sine qua non* of its existence. He turned his attention toward the West : he first rejoiced, then expressed doubts. He turned to the East : he was first all tranquility, then was full of hope. And finally, he proposed a toast to the triple alliance, Religion, Agriculture, and Trade.

"Beneath the shield of Power," added Kallomeïtsef in a severe tone.

"Beneath the shield of a power, at once wise and beneficent," corrected Sipiagin.

The guests drank in silence. The empty space on the left of the orator, or in other words, Neshdanof, gave forth, it is true, a word of disapproval ; but having attracted no one's attention, it relapsed into silence, and the dinner came pleasantly to an end, undisturbed by any new discussion.

Valentine, with the most ravishing smile, offered Solomine a cup of coffee. He declined it, and was already casting his eyes about for his hat, when Sipiagin passed his hand gently through his arm, led him into his study, and first offering him a capital cigar, he proposed placing his factory under his charge, upon the most favorable terms.

"You will be absolute master, Mr. Solomine, absolute master."

Solomine accepted the cigar, but declined the proposition. The most pressing entreaties on the part of Sipiagin could not shake him.

"At least don't give me a positive 'no,' my dear Mr. Solomine, but say that you will reflect upon it until to-morrow."

"It will be the same then, for I cannot accept."

"Until to-morrow, I beg of you ! What can that favor cost you ?"

Solomine was forced to admit that as a matter of fact it would cost him nothing. Nevertheless, on leaving the study, he began at once to look for his hat. But Neshdanof, with whom, up to this moment, he had had no opportunity of exchanging a word, approached him and said quickly :

"Don't go away, I beg of you, for we have not had our talk."

Solomine put down his hat, and at this moment Sipiagin, seeing him walking irresolutely in the parlor, cried out to him :

"You will pass the night with us, will you not ? Of course you will."

"I am at your service," replied Solomine.

Marianne, from the recess of the window threw him a look so full of gratitude that he grew thoughtful at once.

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XXV.

BEFORE seeing Solomine, Marianne had pictured him as a very different person. At the first glance, he appeared commonplace, like the ordinary run of men. She had certainly seen in her life many men just like him, fair, thin, and muscular.

But as she watched him and listened to what he said, she felt a growing confidence in him. It was indeed a feeling of confidence, and nothing else, that he inspired. This man, with his quiet manner, not at all awkward, but a little heavy, could be neither a liar nor a braggart, and one might lean upon him as upon a stone wall. He would not betray—more than that, he would understand and sustain you. Marianne ended by persuading herself that Solomine must have made the same impression not only upon herself, but upon all who were present. She attributed no particular importance to what he said—all these discussions about the factories and merchants hardly interested her; but what pleased her so much was the way in which he spoke, the look, the smile which accompanied it.

He was a truthful man, which was the most important thing in her eyes, and the one that influenced her most.

There is one thing certain, although difficult to explain: the Russians are, of all people in the world, the most steeped in falsehood, and yet they esteem and love nothing so much as honesty. Moreover, in Marianne's eyes, Solomine was encircled with a sort of aureole—he was one of those whom Vassili Nicholaïvitch had recommended to his adherents.

During dinner she had exchanged glances with Neshdanof regarding him, and toward the end of the meal she surprised herself making comparisons between them, which were not to Neshdanof's advantage.

Neshdanof, it is true, had many more refined and more agreeable qualities ; but his face expressed a mixture of restless emotions, spite, annoyance, impatience, and even a certain despondency. He seemed to be sitting on thorns. He would start to speak and then suddenly grow silent. His laugh was forced.

Solomine, on the other hand, although he seemed a little bored, was perfectly at home. Simply seeing him, you felt that this man's mode of life was absolutely independent of others.

"Decidedly, I will ask his advice : he will certainly tell me something valuable."

It was she who dispatched Neshdanof to him after dinner.

The evening passed off stupidly enough. Fortunately, dinner was over late, and night was not far off. Kallomeïtsef was politely distant and silent.

"What's happened to you ?" said Mme. Sipiagin to him, half seriously, half jokingly. "Have you lost anything ?"

"Exactly," replied Kallomeïtsef. "The story is told of one of our generals of the guard, who complained because the soldiers had lost their step. 'Go find me this step,' cried he. And so I say, 'Go find for me this 'Condescend to order, sir.' The 'sir' has disappeared, and with it all respect and all subordination."

Mme. Sipiagin declared that she could not aid him in his search.

Encouraged by the success of his speech at dinner, Sipiagin delivered two other little discourses. He discussed the conduct of the government upon certain indispensable measures ; he even launched forth a speech, more elaborate than subtle, that he had prepared especially for St. Petersburg. In repeating one of the points of the speech he even preceded it with the formula, "If I may so express myself." It was apropos of one of the ministers then in power ; he spoke of him as an uncertain, vain spirit, always tending toward chimerical and illusory aims. On the other hand, Sipiagin, not forgetting that he was dealing with a Russian, a man of the people, took great care to use certain expressions destined to show that he was himself a true Russian,

and that the very secrets of the life of the people were familiar to him.

Thus, Kallomeïtsef having remarked that the rain might spoil the hay crop, he immediately replied with the saying, "If the hay fails the buckwheat will thrive." He quoted also a series of proverbs, such as :

"Merchandise without a merchant is like an orphan."

"Measure the cloth ten times before you cut it once."

"When there is wheat, there is no lack of bushels."

"When at St. George's Day birches have leaves as large as a farthing, gather your wheat for the feast of Our Lady of Kazan."

Several times he made mistakes, and would say, for instance (confounding two proverbs), "Leave the curlew alone on his perch," or, "The gold of the cage feeds the bird."

But the people before whom these accidents happened did not suspect that our true Russian had made any mistake, and moreover, thanks to Prince Kovrijkine, they were already accustomed to such Russian solecisms. Besides, Sipiagin pronounced these proverbs and sayings in a peculiar voice, loud, and even a little coarse, a sort of "peasant's voice."

These sentences, uttered at St. Petersburg, in their proper time and place, would make the lofty ladies say :

"How well he knows the habits of the people."

And the high and mighty dignitaries would add :

"Their habits and their needs."

Valentine devoted herself to Solomine, but the evident lack of success of all her efforts discouraged her ; and in passing Kallomeïtsef she could not help saying in an undertone :

"Ah, how tired I am !"

To which he replied with an ironical bow :

"*Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin !*"

At last, after enduring the formalities and compliments that usually precede the moment of breaking up of a company where we have been very much bored, after the sudden pressure of the hand, the smiles and friendly expressions that custom requires, the visitors and their guests separated equally tired out.

Solomine, after being put in one of the handsomest rooms, if indeed not the handsomest, on the second story, furnished in the English fashion, with a bath-room attached, went in search of Neshdanof.

The young student began by thanking him warmly for consenting to remain.

"I know," said he, "how great a sacrifice it was."

"Why," said Solomine in his quiet way, "what sacrifice was it? But I can refuse you nothing."

"Why?"

"Because I have come to look on you as a friend."

Neshdanof was as delighted as he was surprised. Solomine pressed his hand. Then he sat astride his chair, lit a cigar, and with his elbows on the back, he said:

"Well, what's the matter?"

Neshdanof seated himself in the same way, but he did not light a cigar.

"The matter? The matter is that I am going to run away!"

"You want to leave? Good Lord!"

"No, not leave, but run away from it!"

"Are they obliging you to stay, or have you drawn your pay in advance? If so, just say the word, and I'll—"

"You don't understand me, my dear Solomine; I said 'run away,' and not 'leave,' because I am not going alone."

Solomine raised his head.

"Whom are you going with?"

"With the young girl that you saw here to-day."

"Ah! she is a fine-looking girl. Do you love one another, or is it merely that you have decided to leave together a house in which you are not comfortable?"

"We love one another."

"Ah!"

Solomine reflected for a moment.

"Is she a relative of the family?"

"Yes. But she shares all our opinions. She is fully prepared."

Solomine smiled.

"And you, Neshdanof, are you prepared?"

Neshdanof frowned slightly.

“Why do you ask me? Time will show.”

“I do not doubt you, Neshdanof; if I put the question, it was because I suspect that no one except you is prepared.”

“And Markelof?”

“Yes, true. Markelof. But he, I suppose, was born ready.”

At that moment, some one knocked at the door twice, quickly and cautiously. Then the door was opened without awaiting a reply. It was Marianne. She walked directly up to Solomine.

“I am sure,” she began, “that you will not be surprised at seeing me here at this hour. He has of course told you all” (pointing to Neshdanof). “Give me your hand, and be sure that it is an honest woman who stands before you.”

“Yes, I am sure of that,” replied Solomine in a serious tone.

He had arisen from his chair when Marianne came in.

“I was watching you all through dinner, and I said to myself, What honest eyes she has! Neshdanof has told me of your project. But tell me exactly why you wish to fly?”

“Why? Because of the work, in which I sympathize. Do not be surprised, Neshdanof has concealed nothing from me. The work is to begin in a few days, and shall I remain in this aristocratic house where all is falsehood and deceit? Those that I love will be in danger, and shall I—”

Solomine interrupted her with a gesture.

“Do not excite yourself; take a chair; I will sit down too. You too, Neshdanof, sit down; now listen. If this is the only motive, there is no need of going yet. The work of which you speak will begin later than you think for. A little prudence will do no harm. We should not rush madly with our eyes closed, you may be sure.”

Marianne sat down, and wrapped herself in a large shawl which she had thrown over her shoulders.

“I cannot remain here longer! Here every one insults me! This very day, did not Anna speak to me before Kola, alluding to my father, that as the twig is bent the tree will grow? Kola, astonished, asked me what she meant. As to Mme. Sipiagin, I never speak to her!”

Solomine interrupted her again, this time with a smile; Marianne felt that he was amused by her, but Solomine's smile never wounded any one.

"What is all this about, my dear young lady? I neither know this Anna, nor understand your allusion to the tree. But what does it amount to? A silly woman makes a silly speech to you, and you cannot bear it! How then will you live? The whole world is made up of silly people! This is no good reason. Have you no other?"

"I am convinced," interposed Neshdanof, in a hard voice, "that some day or other Mr. Sipiagin will send me away. It has certainly been talked about. He treats me in the most contemptuous manner!"

Solomine turned to Neshdanof. "Why run away, then, if you are sure they are going to send you away?"

Neshdanof was confused for a moment.

"I have already explained to you—" he began.

"He goes because I am to go with him," cried Marianne.

Solomine looked at her, and shaking his head pleasantly, "Yes, exactly, my dear young lady; but I repeat that if you are really leaving this house because you imagine that the revolution is about to burst—"

"It was," interrupted Marianne, "to consult you on these matters that we begged you to come."

"In that case," continued Solomine, "you can remain in this house, and for some time. But if you wish to go because you love one another, and you have no other means of being united, in that case—"

"In that case?"

"It only remains for me to wish you, according to the old formula, love and concord, and to aid you to the extent of my ability, if it is necessary and possible. For at the very first sight, I felt toward you both as a brother."

Marianne and Neshdanof approached him simultaneously, and seized his hands.

"Tell us only what we must do," cried Marianne. "The revolution is still in the distance; so be it! But only tell us what steps, what preparations are necessary—though preparations are impossible in this house, and under these

circumstances—and we will do what we can with a full heart together ! Only tell us where we should go. Send us. You will send us, will you not ? ”

“ Where ? ”

“ Among the people, of course ! ”

“ Into the forest ? ” thought Neshdanof, who recalled Pakline’s words.

Solomine looked attentively at Marianne.

“ You wish to know the people ? ”

“ Yes, not only to know them, but to act, to work for them. ”

“ Very well ; I promise that you shall know them. I will give you the means of acting, of working for them. And you, Neshdanof, do you purpose devoting yourself to her, and to the people ? ”

“ Undoubtedly, ” replied Neshdanof quickly. “ Jugger-naut, ” thought he, recalling once more Pakline’s words, “ see the enormous chariot advancing. I hear already the grinding and rumbling of its wheels. ”

“ Very well, ” said Solomine, with a thoughtful air ; “ when do you intend leaving ? ”

“ To-morrow, if you wish. ”

“ Very well. Where are you going ? ”

“ Hush !—speak lower, ” whispered Neshdanof ; “ some one is walking in the corridor. ”

All three were silent for a moment.

“ Where do you intend taking refuge ? ” continued Solomine, lowering his voice.

“ We do not know, ” replied Marianne.

Solomine turned toward Neshdanof, who shook his head.

Solomine extended his hand and carefully snuffed the candle, then continued :

“ Listen, my friends ; come to my house at the factory. It is not a handsome place, but you will be in safety ; I will conceal you. I have but one room. No one will seek for you there. Only get there, and we will not betray you. You will say that there are a great many people in a factory. That is precisely its advantage. Where there are so many, it is all the easier to hide. How will it do ? Eh ? ”

“ How can we thank you ? ” replied Neshdanof.

And Marianne, whom the idea of the factory had at first frightened a little, added quickly :

“Oh, yes, yes ; how good you are ! But you will not keep us there a long while, will you ? You will send us away somewhere ?”

“That is for you to say. And in case you wish to be married, I will do all that is necessary for that. There is in the neighborhood, very near the factory, a priest named Zossime, a fine fellow, very accommodating, who is a cousin of mine. He will marry you out of hand.”

Marianne smiled quietly. Neshdanof pressed Solomine’s hand anew ; then, after a moment :

“Tell me,” he asked : “the proprietor of the factory, how will he like this ? May he not make trouble ?”

“Don’t disturb yourself about that, it’s unnecessary,” replied Solomine ; “so long as his factory goes on as it should, he cares for nothing else. And neither you nor this charming lady will have anything to fear from him. Neither need you fear the workmen. Only let me know beforehand. About what time shall I expect you ?”

Marianne and Neshdanof looked at one another.

“Day after to-morrow, early, or the next day,” said Neshdanof at last. “There is no time to lose. I may be dismissed at any moment.”

“It is understood then,” replied Solomine, rising. “I will expect you every morning, and I will not be absent during the entire week. Every precaution shall be taken.”

Marianne, who had taken a step toward the door, advanced toward him.

“Adieu, dear Vassili Fedoitch. That is your name, is it not ?”

“Yes.”

“Adieu—or no—*au revoir* ! And thanks, thanks !”

“Good-by—good night, my dear child.”

“Good-by, Neshdanof—until to-morrow,” she added, and quickly left the room.

The two young men remained a moment motionless and silent.

“Neshdanof !” said Solomine at last ; then he was silent again.

“Neshdanof!” he continued, “tell me what you know about this young girl. What has been her life up to the present time? Who is she? How comes she here?”

Neshdanof related briefly all that he knew.

Solomine listened with profound attention.

“Neshdanof,” said he at last, “watch over this young girl well. For if ever—if it should happen—it would be a wicked thing on your part. Good night.”

He hurried away. Neshdanof remained some time in the middle of the room, and then murmured :

“So much the worse. Let’s think no more about it.”

Marianne on returning to her room found upon her table a little note, which read as follows :

“You pain me. You are destroying yourself. Reflect into what an abyss you are blindly throwing yourself! For whom and why?”

A fresh, penetrating perfume was in the room ; evidently Valentine had just gone out.

Marianne took up a pen, and wrote underneath this note :

“Do not pity me. Heaven knows which of us is more to be pitied. I know, for my part, that I would not be in your place. M.”

She left the note upon the table, perfectly sure that her reply would fall into Valentine’s hands.

The next morning, Solomine, having had an interview with Neshdanof, and finally declined Sipiagin’s proposition, returned home.

He reflected throughout the journey—a thing which scarcely ever happened, the jolting of the carriage usually putting him nearly to sleep.

He thought of Marianne, and of Neshdanof ; he said to himself that if *he* had been in love, he would have acted and spoken differently. But he added, as that had never happened to him, he could hardly know in what way he would have acted.

He remembered an Irish girl he had seen one day in a shop, behind the counter ; she had magnificent hair, nearly black, and blue eyes with long lashes ; she had looked at him with an air at once sad and questioning ; he had

walked up and down the street a long time before the windows, full of agitation ; he had asked himself whether he should or should not make her acquaintance.

At that time, he was on his way to London ; his employer had sent him to make some purchases, and had intrusted him with a considerable sum of money. Solomine was near sending back the money, and remaining in London, so great had been the impression made upon him by the beautiful Polly. (He learned her name—one of the other girls in the shop called her by that name.) But he conquered himself, and returned to his employer. Polly was prettier than Marianne, but the latter had the same sad and questioning look, and she was a Russian.

“ But what has got into me ? ” cried he suddenly, almost aloud, “ bothering my head about another man’s sweetheart ! ”

And he shook the collar of his coat as if he would have liked to shake away at the same time all superfluous thoughts. He arrived just then at the factory, and upon the threshold of his door appeared the outline of his faithful Paul.

XXVI.

SOLOMINE'S refusal deeply vexed Sipiagin. He suddenly perceived that this Stephenson of the soil was not so very remarkable a machinist, and that he made himself out very important and very hard to please, like the plebeian that he was.

"All these Russians, when they imagine they know anything, become impracticable! Kallomeitself is right after all."

Under the influence of these disagreeable and irritating feelings, the statesman in embryo grew haughtier and more distant than ever toward Neshdanof. He gave Kola to understand that he could not take his lesson that day with his teacher, for he must accustom himself to do without his guide. Still he did not immediately turn the instructor out of doors, as the tutor himself feared. He continued to ignore his existence.

On the other hand Valentine did not ignore that of Marianne. A terrible scene took place between the two.

Shortly after dinner they found themselves by chance alone in the salon. Each felt immediately that the hour for the inevitable encounter had come, so after a moment's hesitation they approached one another slowly.

Valentine smiled lightly; Marianne compressed her lips. They were both pale. While crossing the parlor Valentine looked from side to side, and plucked a geranium leaf. Marianne's eyes were fixed steadfastly upon the smiling face which was approaching her.

Mme. Sipiagin was the first to stop, and tapping with her fingers upon the back of a chair:

"Miss Marianne," said she carelessly, "it seems to me that we are very regular correspondents for two persons living under the same roof; it is a very odd procedure, and you know I have little taste for oddities."

"It was not I, madame, who opened this correspondence."

"You are right. For this once I am to blame for the eccentricity. But I could find no other means to awaken in you the feeling—what shall I say?—the feeling—"

"Speak plainly; do not embarrass yourself—don't be afraid of painng me."

"The feeling—of propriety."

Valentine stopped. Nothing was heard in the parlor but the light tapping of her fingers on the back of the chair.

"And where have you found me lacking in propriety?" retorted Marianne.

Valentine shrugged her shoulders.

"My dear, you are no child, and you understand me perfectly. You imagine perhaps that your conduct remains a secret to me, to Anna, to the whole house? Why, you have taken scarcely any pains to keep it a secret. You have simply flaunted everything. My husband alone, perhaps, has noticed nothing up to the present time. He has other things to occupy him, more interesting to him and more important. But, with the exception of him, every one in the house knows your conduct, every one!"

Marianne grew paler and paler.

"I beg you, madame, to explain yourself more clearly. With what exactly are you displeased?"

"Insolent creature," thought Valentine, but she restrained herself.

"You desire to know why I am displeased? Very well. I am displeased with your prolonged interviews with a young man who, by birth, by education, and by his social position is wholly inferior to you. •I am displeased—no, the word is not strong enough—I am disgusted at your visits to him at unseasonable hours, at your visits to his room at night. And all this under my roof! You think perhaps that it is proper that I should be silent, and stand by you in some way in your folly. As an honorable woman—yes, miss, I have been, I am, and always will be that—as an honorable woman, it is impossible for me to express my indignation."

Valentine let herself fall into an arm-chair, as though the very weight of this indignation crushed her.

Marianne smiled for the first time.

"I do not doubt your honor, past, present, or future—I say this in all sincerity. But you excite yourself unnecessarily. I have brought no shame upon your house. The young man to whom you allude, I—yes, I love!"

"You love Mr. Neshdanof?"

"I love him!"

Valentine straightened herself in her chair.

"Come, Marianne, he is a student, without birth or family. He is younger than you are." Valentine was not sorry to say these last words. "What can be the end of all this? You, who are intelligent, what can you find in him? He is an insignificant hobbledohoy."

"You were not always of that opinion."

"Oh, my dear, for Heaven's sake, don't trouble yourself about me. Don't show so much feeling, please. We are talking of your future. Come, seriously, is he a suitable match for you?"

"I confess I had not thought of him as a match, as you say."

"How? What? How do I understand you? Let us admit that you have followed your heart's impulse. But of course that should have marriage for its end."

"I know nothing at all—I have not thought of that."

"You have not thought of it? Why you are losing your mind."

Marianne turned her eyes away slightly.

"Let us cut this interview short, madame. It can accomplish nothing. We cannot understand each other.

Valentine arose brusquely.

"I cannot, I ought not to shorten this interview. It is too serious. I say to you before—" (Valentine wanted to say "before Heaven," but she hesitated, and said instead) "before the whole world, I cannot be silent when I hear such nonsense. Why can't I understand you? What is the meaning of this insufferable pride that takes possession of all young people? No—I understand you too well. I understand that you are nursing these new ideas

that are carrying you to ruin. But it will be too late, then ! ”

“ Perhaps, but rest assured that even if we are perishing, we will not hold up a finger for you to save us. ”

Valentine clasped her hands.

“ Still this pride, this frightful pride ! Come, Marianne, listen to me, ” she added suddenly, changing her tone. She tried to draw Marianne to her, but she drew back. “ Listen to me, I conjure you. After all I am neither so old, nor so stupid that you can’t understand me. I am not full of prejudices. When I was young, I was looked upon as a republican, just like you. Listen. To speak frankly, I have never felt a mother’s tenderness toward you, and it was never in you to miss it ; but I have known, I know, that I have a great responsibility with regard to you, and I have always endeavored to discharge it. Perhaps the match I had planned for you, and to bring about which neither my husband nor myself would have shrunk from any sacrifice—perhaps this match would not correspond with your ideas in every respect ; but believe me, from the bottom of my heart—”

Marianne looked fixedly at Valentine, her fine eyes, her red lips imperceptibly painted, her white hands with their fingers covered with rings, and lightly parted, as the beautiful lady pressed them in such an expressive way upon the waist of her silk dress ; she interrupted her curtly :

“ A match, you say, a match. You mean that vile, heartless man, Kallomeitself ? ”

Valentine withdrew her fingers from her dress.

“ Yes, Marianne, I mean that Mr. Kallomeitself, that excellent and cultivated young man, who will make his wife happy, and who could only be refused by one who is mad, actually mad ! ”

“ Then, aunt, I must be mad ! ”

“ But once more ; seriously, what fault can you find with him ? ”

“ Oh, none at all. I despise him, that’s all. ”

Valentine shook her head impatiently, and fell again into the arm-chair.

“ Well, let us say no more about him. Let us return to our subject. You are in love with Neshdanof ? ”

“Yes.”

“And you intend to continue your interviews with him?”

“Yes, unquestionably.”

“And if I should forbid you?”

“I should not obey you!”

Valentine leaped from her chair.

“Ah, you would not obey me! And I hear this from a young woman whom I have loaded with benefits, from a young woman whom I have received into my house, from—
from—”

“From the daughter of a dishonored father,” finished Marianne in a sad voice. “Go on—speak out plainly.”

“It was not I who said that, miss, but in any event it is not a thing to be proud of! A young woman who eats my bread.”

“Do not reproach me with that, madame. A French governess for your Kola would have cost you more money, and I have given him French lessons.”

Valentine raised her right hand, which held a cambric handkerchief, embroidered with a monogram in the corner, and perfumed; she was about to speak, but Marianne continued impetuously:

“You would be right, a thousand times right, if instead of all the things you have enumerated, instead of all these pretended kindnesses, you could simply say, ‘The young woman whom I have loved.’ But you have still sufficient honesty not to lie to that extent.” Marianne trembled as if with a fever. “You have always detested me. At this very moment in the depths of your heart, about which you say so much, you are delighted, yes, delighted, at seeing that I am realizing your constant predictions, that I am covering myself with disgrace; and the only thing that displeases you is that a part of the scandal must fall upon your aristocratic, your honorable house!”

“You insult me,” stammered Valentine. “Go!”

But Marianne no longer restrained herself.

“Your house, you tell me, all your household, and Anna, and everybody knows of my conduct, and every one is filled with alarm and indignation. But do you think that by any chance I ask anything of you or your household? that I

attach the least value to their opinion? Do you suppose your bread has not been bitter indeed to me? What poverty would I not prefer to such riches! Is there not an abyss between your house and me, an abyss that nothing can ever fill? Is it possible that you—for you too are a woman of intelligence—have not been conscious of all this? And if you feel only hate toward me, is it possible that you do not understand the feeling that I have for you, and which I do not express—only because it is too evident?”

“Leave the room, leave the room, I tell you,” repeated Valentine stamping on the floor with her delicate little foot. Marianne took a single step toward the door.

“I shall relieve you of my presence. But let me tell you this: we know that Rachel, Rachel herself in Racine’s *Bajazet* could never say ‘Go!’ as it should be said. And you! You are always saying, ‘I am an honorable woman, I have been, and always shall be!’ Well, I am very sure that I am much more honorable than you are. Adieu.”

Marianne went out quickly. Valentine, starting from her chair, wanted to cry out, to weep—but neither words nor tears came.

She simply fanned herself with her handkerchief, but the perfume that it gave forth only served to excite her nerves still more. She felt wretched, mortified. She acknowledged that there was some truth in what she had heard. But how could she be judged so harshly, so unjustly?

“Have I really been so bad?” she thought.

She glanced into a mirror that hung between two windows. The mirror reflected a charming face, touched and lined with red, and superb eyes, soft as velvet.

“I? I wicked?” thought she, “with such eyes!”

But at that moment her husband entered, and she again buried her face in her handkerchief.

“What ails you?” he asked with anxiety; “what is the matter, Valia?” He had invented this pet name for her, the diminutive of Valentine, and he only called her by it when they were absolutely alone together; particularly in the country.

She began by saying that it was nothing at all, but at last

turning in her chair, with a graceful and affecting movement, she threw both her hands upon his shoulders (he was standing, leaning toward her) ; she laid her face on his breast, and told him all, very sincerely, withholding nothing, without the least change ; she even tried, if not to exonerate, at least in a measure to excuse Marianne ; she laid all the fault on her youth, on her passionate temperament, on the defects of her early education ; to a certain degree also, and with the same absence of mental reservations, she accused herself.

“If she had been my own child, this would not have happened. I ought to have watched over her more.”

Sipiagin listened to the end with a sympathetic and condescending air, mixed somewhat with severity.

He called her an angel, kissed her forehead, declared that he knew now what course to pursue in his position as master of the house, and went out as a man goes, humane but firm, prepared to fulfill a disagreeable but necessary duty.

Between seven and eight o'clock, after dinner, Neshdanof was in his room, writing to his friend Siline.

“My dear Vladimir, I am writing to you at the time of a pronounced change in my life. I have been dismissed from this house. I go. But that is nothing. I do not go alone. The young girl of whom I have spoken to you goes with me. Everything unites us: the similarity of our fates, the agreement of our opinions, of our aspirations, and our common love. We are in love. At least, I am persuaded that I cannot feel the sentiment of love in any different form from that in which it offers itself to me now.

“But I should be telling a falsehood if I should tell you that I did not experience a secret fear, almost anguish, in my heart. Before us all is dark, and it is into this darkness that we two are about to step. I need not explain to you where we are going, or what part we have chosen. Marianne and I do not seek happiness, a gentle, easy life ; we wish to struggle together, side by side, each sustaining the other. Our aim is well defined ; but the road that must lead us to it, of that we are ignorant.

“Shall we not find, if not sympathy and aid, at least the

possibility of action? Marianne is an excellent, an honorable young girl. If it is our destiny to perish, I shall not reproach myself with having dragged her to it, for there is really no other existence open to her. And yet, Vladimir, there is a weight at my heart—a doubt torments me. Not as to my feelings toward her—oh, no! but—I know not—still it is too late now to recede.

“Hold out your hand to us two, from the distance, and wish us patience, self-denial, and strength in love—above all the latter. And you, ye Russian people, whom we know not, but whom we cherish with our whole being, with our heart’s blood, receive us, not with indifference, but show us what we must attempt for you. Good-by, Vladimir, good-by!”

After having written these lines, Neshdanof went toward the village.

The following night, just as the dawn began to break, he waited at the edge of the clump of birch trees, not far from Sipiagin’s house. A little behind, through the tangled branches of a large thicket of hazel trees, could be seen a country wagon, drawn by two unbridled horses; under the seat, which was formed of ropes twisted in a network, slept a little, old, gray-haired *moujik*, upon a handful of hay, his head buried in a worn-out patched-up coat.

Neshdanof looked constantly down the road toward the huge willows that bordered the garden. The bright and calm night still surrounded them. Some few stars, lost in the broad expanse of heaven, twinkled feebly by turns. Along the edges of the fleecy clouds which stretched across the sky there came gliding from the East a pale blush, and at the same time the slight chill of the early dawn.

Suddenly Neshdanof trembled, and straightened himself up. Somewhere near him a garden gate opened, then closed again. A delicate female form, the head covered with a large handkerchief, a little bundle on her arm, came cautiously from the motionless shadow of the willows, out into the soft dust of the roadway, and crossing it on tip-toe, moved toward the little thicket.

Neshdanof started forward to meet her.

“Marianne!” he murmured.

"It is I!" answered a low voice from beneath the handkerchief that covered her face.

"This way, follow me," said Neshdanof, awkwardly taking her by the arm that carried the bundle.

She shuddered, and pressed her elbows tighter.

He led her to the carriage, and awoke the peasant, who jumped up quickly, got on the box, drew on his coat, and grasped the reins. The horses were impatient to start; he calmed them, hoarse with sleep.

Neshdanof made Marianne sit upon the rope which served for a seat, first spreading his coat over it; he covered her feet with a blanket—the hay was a little damp—and seating himself near her, he turned to the driver, and said in a low voice:

"You have your orders, drive on."

The horses, snorting, impatient, dashed out from the thicket, and the carriage, shaking and jolting on its aged wheels, rolled along the road.

Neshdanof supported his companion's form; Marianne, pulling aside with her cold fingers the handkerchief that hid her face, turned toward him smiling, and said:

"Ah, how delightful, how cool it is, Alexis!"

"Yes," replied the peasant, "there has been a heavy dew."

It was indeed so heavy that the wheel-hubs striking against the tops of the bushes along the way caused little showers to flash out; the grass was all gray, a steel-gray.

Marianne again shivered.

"How fresh, how cool it is!" she repeated joyously. "And liberty, Alexis, liberty!"

XXVII.

SOLOMINE, on hearing that a gentleman and lady had arrived in a carriage and asked to see him, immediately rushed down to the entrance of the factory.

He did not wait to ask the new-comers after their health, and, confining himself to a nod or two of greeting, he bade the driver enter the court and drive to the right to his own house, and then helped Marianne to alight. Neshdanof leaped out after her.

Solomine made them traverse a long, dark corridor, mount a narrow stairway, and led them to a retired part of the house on the second floor. There he opened a low door, and the three entered a little room, with two windows, which was neatly furnished.

"Welcome!" said Solomine with his ever-present smile, which this time seemed warmer and more cordial than usual. "This is your abode. This room, and another next to it. It is not magnificent, but one can at least find content here, and no one will intrude upon you. Beneath your windows is what my employer calls a flower garden; I call it a kitchen garden. It is inclosed on all sides by walls. You will be perfectly secluded. So, once more, welcome, my charming young lady; and you, too, Neshdanof, welcome!"

He pressed the hands of both.

The young people stood motionless, without taking off their traveling clothes, and looked straight before them in a troubled silence, half-surprised, half-delighted.

"Well, what is it?" said Solomine. "Out with it. What things have you brought with you?"

Marianne showed the little bundle that she still carried in her hand.

"I have only this."

"And I," said Neshdanof, "I have a traveling-bag and a valise, which are still in the carriage. I will go—"

"Stay here !"

Solomine opened the door.

"Paul !" he called quickly, leaning over the dark stairway. "There are some things in the carriage ; bring them up."

"Immediately !" replied the voice of the ever-present Paul.

Solomine returned to Marianne, who had taken off her shawl and was unfastening her mantilla.

"Everything has gone right ?" said he to her.

"Yes. No one saw us. I left a letter for Mr. Sipiagin. I brought no clothes with me, because, as I am to be a—" (she dared not say, though they knew not why, "among the people,") that was not worth the trouble. I should have no use for them. And I have money to buy what I may need."

"We will see to that hereafter. But now," continued Solomine, pointing out Paul to them, who entered just then with Neshdanof's things, "I intrust you to the best friend I have in the house ; you may rely upon him as implicitly as upon myself. Have you spoken to Tatiana about the samovar ?" he added in a low tone.

"They are bringing it," replied Paul, "and the cream, and everything."

"Tatiana is his wife," continued Solomine. "She is as trustworthy as he. Until you get used to this life, she will wait on you."

Marianne threw her cloak upon a leather divan in a corner.

"Call me Marianne. I do not care to be called 'Miss.' As for a servant, I do not need one. I have not come here to be waited on. Do not look at my gown ; I have no other here. But it shall be changed."

Her dress of ladies' cloth was very simple, but it had been cut by a dressmaker in St. Petersburg. It fitted her figure and shoulders elegantly. It was, in fact, in the height of fashion.

"Pshaw ! she won't be your servant. She will be your 'help'—in the American fashion. But that need not pre-

vent your taking a cup of tea. It is very early, but you both must be tired out. I will go to my work, now ; I will see you again later. If you have need of anything at all, ask Paul and Tatiana for it."

Marianne held out both her hands to him with a quick gesture.

"How can I thank you?" she said, gazing at him tenderly.

Solomine patted her hand gently.

"I might tell you that I don't deserve your thanks—and I should tell the truth. But I much prefer to tell you how much pleasure your thanks give me. But I must really leave you ; I shall see you again soon. Come, Paul !"

Marianne and Neshdanof were alone.

She moved toward him, and looked at him as she had looked at Solomine, only with a far happier, tenderer, and brighter look.

"Oh, my friend," she said, "we are beginning a new life. At last ! At last ! You cannot think how lovely, how charming this humble room seems to me, compared with that detestable palace. Speak ! are you happy ?"

"I am happy, Marianne, because I am beginning this new life with you. You will be my guiding star, my help, my strength !"

"Dear Alexis ! But I must put myself to rights a little. I will run into my room. Wait here for me. I will be back in a moment."

Marianne went into the adjoining room, closed the door behind her, then, a moment after, half opened it, and put her head through the opening.

"How kind this Solomine is !" she said.

Then she disappeared again, and the key was heard turning in the lock.

Neshdanof went to the window, looked into the garden, and, without knowing why, his eyes fastened themselves upon an old, stunted apple-tree.

He shook himself, stretched a little, opened his traveling-bag, and without taking anything out began to dream.

At the end of a quarter of an hour Marianne reappeared, gay, bright, full of spirits, the color on her cheeks

revived by fresh water, and some moments after, Tatiana, Paul's wife, brought in the samovar, the tea things, rolls, and cream.

Tatiana was a perfect contrast to the figure of her Bohemian of a husband. She was a veritable Russian housewife, solidly built, fair, fresh, bare-headed, with a great tress tightly fastened about a horn comb ; her features were a little coarse, but pleasant ; her eyes gray, kindly, and frank. She was clad in a calico dress, faded but in good condition ; her hands, though rather large, were neat and handsome.

She bowed quietly, said in a strong, clear voice, without a drawl :

"I wish you all happiness," and then began to set out the samovar, the cups, and the rest.

Marianne went up to her.

"Let me help you, Tatiana," said she ; "hand me a napkin."

"It's nothing at all, miss. We are used to this work. Vassili Fedoitich told me if you wanted anything done, just give the order and we will do it."

"Tatiana, don't call me miss, please. I am dressed like the aristocracy, but I—I am entirely—"

Marianne, disturbed by Tatiana's persistent gaze, interrupted her.

"What are you then ?" asked Tatiana in her calm tone.

"Of course I am in reality noble, but I wish to put aside all that and to become a woman of the people."

"Ah ! yes ; now I understand. Then you are one of those who wish to be simplified. There are a great many of them now."

"What did you say, Tatiana ? To be simplified ?"

"Yes ; it is only a way of expressing what you now wish to do. To live entirely as the working classes live, to be simplified ! It is indeed a good work—teaching the people to reason. But it is not easy ; no, indeed. May God give you good speed !"

"To be simplified !" repeated Marianne. "Only hear, Alexis ; at this very moment we are being simplified !"

Neshdanof began to laugh, also repeating "simplified."

"And who is this? Your husband or your brother?" asked Tatiana, carefully rinsing the cups with her large, skillful hands, looking with a half caressing half jesting smile now at Neshdanof, now at Marianne.

"No," replied Marianne. "He is neither my husband nor my brother."

Tatiana raised her head.

"Ah! you are living in free love; that, too, is very common now. In other days it was more often known among the Old Believers, the *Raskolniks*; but in these days there are a great many who do the same thing. If God only gives you his blessing, and you live in content and mutual confidence, no need of priests in that case. One finds many such instances in our factory, and they are none the worse."

"What pretty expressions you use, Tatiana; 'free love'—that pleases me much. By the way, Tatiana, I have something to ask you. I want to make or to buy a dress like yours, or even plainer; shoes, stockings, and a fichu exactly like yours. I have all the money I need."

"Good, that can easily be done, miss; don't be vexed. I will not say it again, I will not call you miss again, but what shall I call you?"

"Marianne."

"And your father's first name?"

"What can be the necessity for my father's first name? Call me simply Marianne. I call you Tatiana."

"It is not at all the same thing. Tell me his name."

"If you insist, my father's name was Vikenti (Vincent), and yours?"

"Mine? Ossip."

"Very well, I shall call you Tatiana Ossipovna."

"And I shall call you Marianne Vikentievna; that will do very well."

"You will take your tea with us, Tatiana Ossipovna?"

"For the first day I will not refuse, Marianne Vikentievna; only a small cup."

"Will you be seated, Tatiana Ossipovna?"

"I wish you well, Marianne Vikentievna."

Tatiana sat down, and took her tea in the fashion of

Russian people ; turning constantly between her fingers a small piece of sugar, biting it in little bits while winking the eye on the side she was nibbling. Marianne entered into conversation with her. Tatiana answered without the least embarrassment, asking questions in her turn and talking freely. She spoke of Solomine almost as if he were a god, placing her husband next to Solomine. But factory life wore on him.

"This is not a city," said she, "nor is it a village. But for Monsieur Solomine I would not stay here one hour."

Marianne listened attentively to all she had to say. Neshdanof, seated a little apart watching his companion, was not surprised at her interest. To Marianne it was all new ; as for himself, he seemed to have seen hundreds like Tatiana, and to have talked with them a hundred times.

"Listen, Tatiana Ossipovna," said Marianne ; "at this moment you think we wish to instruct the people ; not at all, we wish to serve them."

"How is that, to serve them ? Teaching them ought to be your only service. Look at me, for instance : when I was married, I could neither read nor write ; now, I can do both, thanks to Vassili Fedotitch ! It was not he who taught me, but he paid a good old man who taught me everything, and I am young still, though I am so big."

Marianne was silent for a moment.

"I should like," she said, "to learn some trade, but we will talk more about this at another time. I am a very poor seamstress. If I could only learn something of cooking I could become a cook."

Tatiana was amazed.

"A cook ! what for ? Cooks live with the rich, with merchants, and the poor cook for themselves. In a co-operative association, perhaps, among the workmen—but ah ! there cannot be a more pitiful trade."

"And even though I might be in the house of a rich man, I might come in contact with the poor. If not, where could I go to find them ? I should not always meet with such an opportunity as that of to-day, with you."

Tatiana replaced the cup in the saucer, turning it upside down.

"That is not an easy matter to decide," she said at last smiling ; "one cannot twist it around one's finger like a bit of thread ; all I know myself I will show you, but I am not very skillful ; talk to my husband about it. With him, it is quite another matter ; he reads all sorts of books, and he will explain everything to you as clearly as possible."

While looking at Marianne she saw she was rolling a cigarette.

"Pardon me, Marianne Vikentievna," she said ; "but if you really wish to be simplified, you must have done with all that," pointing to the cigarette ; "because, in these occupations, especially in that of a cook, it is never allowed, and everybody will know immediately that you are a 'demoiselle.'" Marianne threw her cigarette out of the window.

"I will not smoke any more, it is a habit one can readily throw aside. If women among the people never smoke, then it is better for me not to do so."

"You are quite right ; men indulge in such foolish habits ; but women in our class—never ! See ! there is Mr. Solomine, I hear his step ; ask him, he will make everything clear."

Mr. Solomine's voice was heard at the door.

"Can I come in ?"

"Come in ! come in !" called out Marianne.

"This is an English habit that I have acquired," said Solomine as he came in. "Well, how is everything going on ? haven't you had time to feel bored and wearied yet ? You are taking your tea with Tatiana ? Now that is thoroughly sensible. My master's arrival to-day is very inconvenient, and he will stay to dine with us ; but what can I do ? he is my master."

"Who is he ?" asked Neshdanof, coming out of his corner.

"A man, exactly like anybody else. He is not as innocent as a babe unborn, as they say ; but not bad, on the whole. With me he is as smooth as possible. He can't get along without me. But I have come to tell you that we shall not probably see each other again to-day. Your dinner will be brought to you ; do not show yourselves, especially in the

yard. Do you think, Marianne, that the Sipiagins will make any search for you—that they will pursue you ?”

“I think not,” said Marianne.

“And I am fully persuaded that they will,” said Neshdanof.

“Never mind,” said Solomine ; “in any case, however, it is well to be prudent at first. Afterward everything will take care of itself.”

“Yes, but listen,” answered Neshdanof ; “Markelof ought to know where to find me, we must notify him.”

“Why so ?”

“It is absolutely necessary—he ought always to know where I am. I have promised him. He will not tell anything.”

“Very well, we will send him word by Paul.”

“And my clothes will be ready ?” asked Neshdanof.

“The costume ? why then this is to be a veritable masquerade—not expensive, thank God ! Come, Tatiana, let us go.”

Marianne and Neshdanof were once more left alone.

XXVIII.

THEY began as at first by clasping tightly each other's hands—then Marianne cried :

“Wait, I am going to help you to arrange your room,” and she immediately began unpacking the traveling-bag and valise.

Neshdanof wanted to help her, but she declared she would do all that by herself, “because it was very necessary for her to accustom herself to be of service ;” and, in fact, she herself hung up everything on some nails which she had found in the table drawer and which she hammered into the wall, using the back of a brush as a hammer ; she also put away the linen in a little old commode standing between the two windows.

“What is this ?” she said suddenly. “A revolver ? Is it loaded ? Why do you have a revolver ?”

“It is not loaded—but give it to me all the same. You ask me why ? In our trade nobody stirs out without one !”

She laughed and returned to her work, shaking each article of clothing, and beating it with the palm of her hand. She even placed under the sofa two pairs of boots ; some books, a package of papers, and the famous book of manuscript poems were solemnly ranged on a corner table with three legs, which she called the writing and working table, to distinguish it from the other, which, being round, she said was an eating and tea table.

This done she took with both hands the book containing the verses, raised it to a level with her eyes, and looking at Neshdanof over the edge, she said smiling :

“We will read all this together, whenever our different occupations give us any leisure, won't we ?”

“Give me the book, I am going to throw it into the fire !” cried Neshdanof ; “it is fit for nothing else !”

"Why then did you bring it away with you? No, no, I will not let you burn it; however, they say that poets are always threatening to burn their works, but they never do it. In any case I shall take care of it myself, it will be much safer."

Neshdanof wished to protest against this, but Marianne ran into her chamber with the book and returned with empty hands. She seated herself near Neshdanof, but in a moment arose saying:

"You have not yet seen my chamber; do you not want to see it? It is no worse than yours. Come, I will show it to you."

Neshdanof rose also and followed Marianne. Her chamber was a trifle smaller than his, but the furniture was better and more modern; in the window there was a glass vase of flowers, and in the corner an iron bedstead.

"See how good Solomine is!" she cried; "but we must not be spoiled by it; we shall not often have such a lodging. Do you know what would be wise? To arrange not to separate at all, but to find a place for us both. That might be difficult," she added, after an instant; "however, we will see. You have at least no idea of returning to St. Petersburg?"

"What should I do in St. Petersburg? Attend the course at the University, and give lessons—to what end?"

"Let us see what Solomine will say; he knows better than we the wisest thing for us to do, and the wisest way of doing it."

They returned to the first room and again sat down near each other. They praised Solomine, Tatiana, and Paul; they talked of Sipiagin, of their past life, which all at once seemed to disappear in the distance, as if enveloped in a fog; they pressed each other's hands and exchanged radiant smiles; then they spoke of the new class into which they were determined to penetrate, and of how to do it without exciting mistrust.

Neshdanof was convinced that the less they thought of all that the better they would succeed.

"No doubt!" exclaimed Marianne; "since we wish to be '*simplified*,' as Tatiana says."

"Not just that," began Neshdanof; "I meant to say that we must not make too much effort."

Marianne interrupted him with a burst of laughter.

"I was thinking of what I have sometimes said, Alexis, that we are both 'simplified.'"

Neshdanof laughed too, repeating "simplified," and then became thoughtful, while Marianne in her turn also became thoughtful.

"Alexis!" said she.

"What?"

"It seems to me that we are a little embarrassed. *Nouveaux mariés*" (she said these two words in French) "must experience something like this the first day of their wedding journey. They are happy, very happy, but at the same time they are a little embarrassed."

Neshdanof smiled in a constrained manner.

"*'Nouveaux mariés.'* You know very well, Marianne, that is not our case."

Marianne arose, and standing before Neshdanof,— "That depends upon you," said she.

"How?"

"Alexis, listen! When you tell me, on the word of a man of honor—and I shall believe you, for I know you are a man of honor—when you tell me that you love me with that love—that love which binds together for life—I am yours."

Neshdanof colored, and slightly turning away, said:

"When I say that to you—"

"Yes, when you say that to me. But you do not say it to me now. Oh, yes, Alexis, you are really a man of honor! Now, let us talk of more serious matters."

"But, Marianne, do I not love you?"

"I know it, and I will wait; but your writing-table is not yet in order. Stop! there is something wrapped up in here, something hard."

Neshdanof sprang from his chair.

"Let it be, Marianne! I beg of you do not touch it!"

Marianne glanced at him over her shoulder; raising her eyebrows with astonishment.

"Is it a secret—you have a secret?"

"Yes, yes," stammered Neshdanof, and excessively disturbed, he added, as an explanation, "It is a portrait."

The word escaped in spite of himself.

The paper that Marianne held in her hands contained the portrait given to the young man by Markelof.

"A portrait," said she slowly, "of a woman?"

She held out to him the little package; but he took it so awkwardly that it almost fell to the floor and the wrapper opened.

"But it is—it is my own portrait—then, being mine, I have the right to take it!"

She took it from his hands, saying:

"Was it you who drew it?"

"No, it was not I."

"Who then? Markelof?"

"You have guessed right. It was he."

"How happened you to have it?"

"He made me a present of it."

"When?"

Neshdanof told her under what circumstances it had been given him.

While he was talking, Marianne glanced attentively at him and at the portrait, and the young people both had a vague feeling that if *he* had been in this room *he* would have had the right. But neither Marianne nor Neshdanof uttered this thought aloud, perhaps because each read it in the other's mind. Marianne gently wrapped up the portrait and replaced it on the table.

"He was a good fellow," she said softly. "Where is he now?"

"Where is he? at home, of course—at his own house. I shall go to see him to-morrow, or the day after, for some books and pamphlets he meant to give me, but which he forgot when I came away."

"Do you really believe, Alexis, that in giving you this portrait, he meant to renounce everything, absolutely everything?"

"It seemed so to me."

"And yet you expect to find him at home?"

"Certainly."

"Ah!" and Marianne dropped her eyes and let her arms fall at her side.

"There is Tatiana bringing us our dinner," she exclaimed. "What an excellent woman she is."

Tatiana appeared, carrying the cloth, napkins, plates, and dishes. While setting the table, she told what had been going on at the factory.

"The master has arrived from Moscow, by rail, and has rushed through the different floors like a lunatic; he understands nothing about it all; but it is all for effect, for the look of the thing. He wished to find fault, but Solomine put a stop to that immediately. 'I will leave at once,' he told the master, who soon lowered his crest. Now they are dining together. The master has brought a companion with him, and he admires everything. He must be a man of money, he is silent nearly all the time, only shaking his head. A stout man, a *very* stout man, a regular big nob from Moscow. That is a first-rate proverb, 'Moscow is the hub of this universe, everything turns on it.'"

"How you notice everything!" exclaimed Marianne.

"Well, yes, I generally keep my eyes open," answered Tatiana. "There, your dinner is ready. Eat it with a good appetite. I am going to sit down and look at you."

The young people seated themselves at the table; Tatiana sat down in the embrasure of the window, resting her cheek on the palm of her hand.

"I am looking at you," she said. "How young and helpless you are—you two! It is pleasant to see you, so pleasant that it almost makes my heart ache! Ah, my pretty pigeons! You have taken upon yourselves a burden much too heavy for your shoulders! It is young creatures like you whom the people of the czar like to stick into prison."

"Bah! my good woman, don't trouble yourself about us," answered Neshdanof. "You know the proverb, 'Who calls himself a mushroom must go to the basket.'"

"Yes, I know; but the baskets nowadays are very narrow, and one does not come out of them just in the way one would like best."

"Have you any children?" asked Marianne, in order to change the subject.

"I have one boy, who already goes to school. I had a daughter, but I have lost her—poor little thing—by an accident: she fell under a wheel—oh! if she had only died instantly! But no, she suffered a long, long time. From that moment I was softened; before, I had been hard, hard as a pine knot."

"Why? did you not love your husband then?"

"Oh, yes; that is one thing, that is all very well for a young girl. You love yours, do you not?"

"Yes, I love him."

"You love him very much?"

"Very much."

"Is he very—" Tatiana looked first at Neshdanof, then at Marianne, and did not finish. For the second time Marianne turned the conversation. She told Tatiana she had given up smoking, for which she praised her highly. Then she began again to talk of her costume, reminding Tatiana of her promise to teach her a little about cooking.

"And then," she added, "I have still something else to ask of you: could you find me some coarse, unbleached thread? I want to knit some stockings, perfectly plain."

Tatiana promised that all this should be done, cleared off the table, and left the room with her usual serene, self-reliant bearing.

"And now what are we going to do?" said Marianne to her companion, and, without waiting for his answer, "Listen; as our serious work does not begin until to-morrow, why cannot we devote this evening to literature? Let us read your poems. I shall be a harsh critic."

Neshdanof objected for some time; at last he yielded to her persuasions, and began to read aloud from his little book.

Marianne seated herself near him, looking full in his face while he was reading. She was indeed a severe judge, as she had said. A great many of the poems displeased her; she preferred the short pieces, purely lyric, without any moral at the end.

Neshdanof did not read very well : he dared not declaim boldly, and wishing at the same time to avoid stiffness, his delivery was neither flesh nor fish.

Marianne interrupted him suddenly to ask if he was familiar with some verses of Dobrolioubof beginning with these words, "The thought of death saddens me but little,"* and she repeated it from beginning to end—not much better than Neshdanof, but in a somewhat childish fashion. Neshdanof made the remark that this poetry was bitter and melancholy to the last degree ; then he added that he (Neshdanof) would never have written it, because he need not fear that tears would be shed upon his grave. There was no one to shed them. "They will be shed for you if I survive you," said Marianne slowly.

She raised her eyes to the ceiling, remained silent for a moment, then murmured, as if talking to herself :

"How *could* he take my portrait from memory?"

Neshdanof turned quickly toward her. "Yes, from memory."

Marianne was astonished to hear an answer. She had no idea that she had asked this question aloud.

"It is most extraordinary," she continued in the same low, dreamy tone, "for he really has no talent for painting : what was I saying?" She added aloud, "Ah, yes ; it was about those lines of Dobrolioubof. One ought to make verses like Pouchkine, or like these verses of Dobrolioubof. It is not poetry, but it is something quite as good."

"And verses like mine," said Neshdanof, "should not be written at all, I suppose?"

"Verses like yours? Oh ! they please your friends, not

* "The thought of death saddens me but little ; what my sick spirit dreads is, that death may play some poor joke upon me.

"I fear lest over my cold body some one may shed hot tears ; lest, with inappropriate zeal, some one may place flowers on my coffin.

"Lest, from disinterested motives, a crowd of friends may walk behind me, and lest, when buried beneath the earth, I become an object of sympathy.

"Lest all that I have longed for so ardently, and so vainly wished for all my life, may come and smile upon me with an enchanting smile when I am in my coffin."

(Dobrolioubof, *Complete Works*, Vol. IV., p. 615.)

because they are especially good, but because you are a good man and they are like you."

Neshdanof smiled saying, "Let us drop them and me too." Marianne gave him a little tap on his hand, telling him he was very naughty. A moment after she said "she was very tired and should go to sleep."

"By the way, you know," added she, shaking her short, thick hair, "I have one hundred and thirty-seven rubles; how much have you?"

"I have ninety-eight."

"Oh! we are rich—for people who are 'simplified'! Good-by till to-morrow!"

She left the room: but after a few moments, her door was softly opened and through the crack her voice said "Good night," then, more softly, "Good night."

And the key turned in the lock. Neshdanof threw himself on the sofa hiding his face in his hands; then suddenly he rose, walked toward her door, and knocked.

"What is it?" called Marianne.

"I do not say *until* to-morrow, Marianne, but *to-morrow!*"

"To-morrow," gently answered the voice.

XXIX.

THE next day very early Neshdanof knocked again at Marianne's door. "It is I!" he answered to the question of "Who is there?" "Can you come?"

"Wait a moment—directly."

She came out, and uttered an exclamation of surprise. At first she had not recognized him. He wore a caftan of yellowish nankeen, very short-waisted, with a double row of small buttons; his hair was arranged in Russian fashion parted in the middle; he had a blue handkerchief tied about his neck; he held in his hand a cap of which the visor was broken, and on his feet were unblacked boots of bullock skin.

"Good gracious! how ugly you are!" exclaimed Marianne—then suddenly throwing her arms about his neck, she kissed him warmly. "But why have you chosen such a costume? you look like a '*petit bourgeois*' from the city, or a peddler, or a retired servant. Why do you wear this caftan, instead of a workman's jacket, or a simple peasant's *armiak*?"

"Precisely," began Neshdanof, who in this costume had just the air of a small shopkeeper; he felt it too, and in his heart was vexed, disturbed, so much so, that he moved his hands mechanically over his dress as if to brush himself.

"Paul assured me that in a jacket or *armiak* I should be at once recognized; while this costume, he said, they would swear I had worn all my life. That is not very flattering to my vanity, by the way."

"Then you are going to begin at once?" inquired Marianne hastily.

"Yes, I'm going to try, though in thinking it over—"

"How happy you are!" interrupted Marianne.

"This Paul here is a most extraordinary man," continued Neshdanof; "he knows everything, he has eyes which search you through—then, suddenly, there is a look in his face as if everything passed by him without his noticing anything. He is very obliging—and at the same time is a bit of a scoffer. He has brought me some pamphlets from Markelof, whom he knows, and whom he calls familiarly Serge Michaelovitch. As for Solomine, he is perfectly devoted to him, he would go through fire and water for him."

"And Tatiana would too," said Marianne. "Why is every one so devoted to him?"

Neshdanof made no reply.

"What pamphlets did Paul bring you?" asked Marianne.

"Oh, only the usual ones. 'The Story of Four Brothers,' and then—in short, only those that are best known; however, these are much the best."

Marianne looked about uneasily.

"Where can Tatiana be? She promised to be here very early."

"And here she is," said Tatiana, coming into the room with a bundle in her hand. As she reached the door, she had heard Marianne's exclamation. "You will have plenty of time. Was it not a matter of business?"

Marianne hurried to meet her.

"You have brought it?"

Tatiana tapped the bundle with her hand saying:

"Everything is here—all ready; you have nothing to do but to try it on; after that you can show yourself, and look your prettiest."

"Oh, my good Tatiana, come quickly," and Marianne dragged her into her chamber.

Left alone, Neshdanof walked twice about the room with a heavy dragging step, which he fancied, no one knows why, was the step of a little shopkeeper; he smelled his sleeve, then the inside of his cap, and made a grimace; he looked at himself in a small glass against the wall by the window, and shook his head; decidedly he was not handsome.

"After all, so much the better," he thought.

Then he selected some pamphlets, thrust them into his pocket, pronouncing at the same time some words, after the fashion of the working classes, somewhat like this for instance, "Ho, you fellow, there ! what is the row ?"

"It seems to me it is something like that ; but bah ! why need I play the actor ? My accoutrement is quite enough."

Neshdanof reminded himself at this moment of the German exile, who wanted to escape through Russia, though he spoke Russ very badly ; he bought in some country town a merchant's cap, bordered with catskin, and he had been everywhere taken for a merchant, and had thus succeeded in crossing the frontier. At this moment Solomine entered.

"Ha ! ha !" he said ; "you are all equipped."

"It is still very early, but I suppose you wish to accustom yourself to your costume. All very well, but you will be obliged to wait, for my master has not yet gone ; he is still asleep."

"I will go out later," answered Neshdanof ; "I am going to take a walk about the environs, while I am waiting for more precise instructions."

"That is right ; only listen, Alexis—I shall call you simply Alexis, shall I ?"

"Alexis, yes, very well ; 'Lixei' * if you wish," added Neshdanof laughing.

"No, no ; we must not season too highly. What is the use ? Listen : Good will, they say, is worth more than money. I see you have some pamphlets ; distribute them freely, wherever you will, except in the factory ; not there !"

"Why ?"

"Because, first, it would be dangerous for you ; secondly, I have promised my master that it should not be done here, the factory really belongs to him ; thirdly, there are already some things started among us—schools, for instance—and you might spoil all. Do what you will, and as you will, at your own risk. I shall not interfere with you, but do not meddle with my workmen."

* Popular way of pronouncing Alexis.

"Prudence is always a very good thing," said Neshdanof with a half sarcastic smile. Solomine smiled broadly, as was his wont.

"Precisely, my good Alexis, it is always a most excellent thing. But what do I see? What have we here?"

These last exclamations referred to Marianne who, in a spotted calico dress, which had evidently been often washed, with a little yellow fichu over her shoulders, and a red handkerchief as a headdress, had just appeared at her chamber door. Tatiana, who was behind, was looking at her with amusement.

Marianne looked fresh and young in this simple costume, which was much more becoming to her than Neshdanof's long caftan was to him.

"Vassili Fedoitch, I beg of you, do not laugh at me," said Marianne, in a pleading tone, coloring as red as a rose.

"Oh, look at them! See our couple," cried Tatiana clapping her hands. "Only, my fine fellow, my little pigeon, do not be vexed—but listen to me. You are very nice, there is no doubt of it; but by the side of my little queen you do not cut a very fine figure."

"The truth is," said Neshdanof to himself, "she is charming! How I love her!"

"Here, look!" continued Tatiana; "she has exchanged rings with me; she has given me her gold ring, and I have given her my silver one."

"The girls among the lower classes do not have gold rings," said Marianne.

Tatiana sighed. "I will keep it for you, my little dove; make yourself easy."

"Come seat yourselves, both of you," said Solomine, who during all this had not ceased to watch Marianne with his head bent. "In other days, you may remember, it was the custom to seat oneself before beginning a journey, and you both are entering upon a long and difficult road."

Marianne, still blushing, sat down; Neshdanof did the same; then Solomine; Tatiana herself sat down on a large block of wood which stood upright.

Solomine looked attentively at all of them.

"Let us step back and see them better."

"How comfortably we are seated," he added, half closing his eyes; then all at once he burst into a laugh, but such a good, honest laugh that, so far from wounding them, it made all bright and gay.

But Neshdanof rose quickly. "I'm going," he said, "this very moment; for to tell the truth, all this, though very pretty, is too much like a farce with continual change of dress."

"Make yourself easy," he said, turning toward Solomine, "your factory shall not be interfered with. I am going to wander about the suburbs, and when I return I will tell you—and you, Marianne—all my adventures, that is, if I have anything to relate. Give me your hand and wish me good luck."

"If you were to take a little tea before you go?" suggested Tatiana.

"Oh, no; why lose time for that? If I should want it I can go to a tavern."

Tatiana shook her head, saying, "Nowadays on our highways there are as many taverns as there are fleas in a sheep's wool. There are large villages everywhere, and village means tavern."

"Good-by all," said Neshdanof, correcting himself, as he remembered the part he was playing. But he had not yet reached the door when he saw Paul start up under his nose out of the darkness of the hall. He presented him with a long, thin, pilgrim's staff, from which the bark was cut spirally its whole length.

"Pray take this, Alexis Dimitritch," he said, "to use on the road, and the farther you hold it from you the more it will be the right thing."

Neshdanof took the staff without saying anything and went out. Paul followed him. Tatiana was also going away, but Marianne came up to detain her.

"Stay, Tatiana, I really have need of you."

"I'm coming back directly; I am only going for the *samovar*. Your companion has gone away without taking any tea; he must be in a great hurry, but that is no reason you should fast. You'll have plenty of time."

Tatiana went out. Solomine rose and went to the other

end of the room, when at last Marianne turned toward him, somewhat astonished at his silence. She saw on his face, in his eyes, which were fixed upon her, an expression she had never remarked in him before—an expression of uneasiness, of interrogation, almost of curiosity. She was troubled, and colored again, and Solomine, as if ashamed of what he had allowed her to read in his face, began to talk in a louder voice than usual.

“Come, come, Marianne, this is the beginning!”

“The beginning? What beginning? See here, I feel very uncomfortable; Alexis was quite right, we are only playing a farce!”

Solomine sat down again on his chair.

“But—permit me, Marianne, how did you mean to begin? We haven’t got to build barricades with a flag floating over them, and to hurrah for the Republic—and besides, that is not a woman’s business. I will tell you what you have to do. To-day you will see some Loukerie or other, and you will teach her—never mind what—something good; and it will be no easy task, for a Loukerie is not very bright, and she disturbs you. She’s sure there is no need of her knowing what you wish to teach her; then, at the end of two or three weeks you will make another attempt with another—Loukerie; and, in the interval, you will wash a child’s face, or you will teach it the alphabet, or you will give some medicine to a sick person. This is the real beginning.”

“But the Sisters of Charity do just that. If it’s as you say, what is the good of all this?” And she pointed to her dress and all that was about her. “I had dreamt of better things.”

“You would like to make a sacrifice of yourself?”

Marianne’s eyes lighted up.

“Yes, yes, indeed!”

“And Neshdanof?”

Marianne shrugged her shoulders.

“Neshdanof? Ah, well; we shall go together—or I shall go alone.”

Solomine looked fixedly at Marianne.

“Listen to me!” said he; “don’t be offended at my plain words; but, from my point of view, washing and

combing a scurfy little child is a sacrifice—and a great sacrifice—of which few people are capable.”

“But I don’t refuse to do that.”

“I know it—yes—you are even capable of it. You will do that, while waiting, and perhaps, later, something else.”

“But at first I must get Tatiana to teach me.”

“Certainly; get her to teach you. You will wash the dishes, you will pluck the chickens—and later, who knows? You may perhaps save your country.”

“You are making fun of me?”

Solomine shook his head gently.

“No, my good Marianne, believe me, I am not laughing at you; my words are the simple truth. As the times are now, you Russian *women* are much more sensible and better than we are.”

Marianne, who had dropped her eyes, raised them.

“I should like to fulfill your expectation, Solomine, and then die.”

Solomine rose.

“No; live, live! that is the most important thing. By the way, have you no curiosity to know what is going on at your house about your flight? Perhaps they are trying to find you. You have only to speak to Paul, and he can find everything out in the twinkling of an eye.”

“What an astonishing man Paul is!” said Marianne surprised.

“Yes, he is rather astonishing. For instance, when you and Alexis are to be married, it is he who will arrange everything with Zossime. You remember, don’t you, the priest I have spoken to you about? but, just now, there is no necessity for that. No?”

“No.”

“No? Oh, very well!”

Solomine drew near to the door which separated the door of Neshdanof’s chamber from that of Marianne.

“What are you looking at?” asked Marianne.

“Can this be locked?”

“Yes, it locks,” said Marianne in a low voice.

Solomine came toward her. She still sat with her eyes cast down.

"Very well, then," he said cheerfully ; " there is no need of knowing what has been resolved upon by the Sipiagins ; this is fully understood."

Solomine moved as if to go out.

"Solomine !"

"What is it ?"

"Tell me, please, why you, who are always so taciturn, are now so talkative with me ? You do not know how much pleasure it has given me."

"Why ?" Solomine took the young girl's soft little hands into his, so large and hard. "Why ? Most probably because I like you so much. Good-by."

He went out. Marianne stood motionless, watching him as he left the room. After a moment's thought, she went to seek Tatiana, who had not yet brought the samovar. She took, it is true, a cup of tea, but she washed the cups and saucers, plucked the chickens, and even combed the dirty, tangled hair of a little boy.

At dinner-time, she returned to her own room and had not long to wait for Neshdanof.

He came in, tired, covered with dust, and threw himself upon the sofa.

She sat down by his side immediately.

"Come, come, tell me all about it."

He answered her in a weak, tired voice :

"Do you remember these two lines :

' It would all be ridiculous
If it hadn't been sad ?'

You remember them, don't you ?"

"Certainly."

"Very well ; these two lines apply perfectly to my first expedition ; but no, on the whole it is really ridiculous. In the first place, I am convinced that nothing is easier than to play a part ; no one has even thought of suspecting me ; but one thing, of which I hadn't thought, is the necessity of getting ready beforehand some story ; otherwise, when people ask you, 'Where do you come from ?' and 'What are you going to do ?' you have nothing to say. After all, even that is not really necessary. It is quite enough to

ask a man to take a glass of brandy, and tell him some humbugging story or other."

"Ah, so that is what you have been doing?" asked Marianne.

"Yes, as well as I could ; furthermore every one, without exception, is discontented, and not one of them has even the faintest desire to know how to remedy this dissatisfaction ; but, as a propagandist, I am not very strong. I have left without saying anything two pamphlets in two huts. I have slipped one into a telega. What will become of them God only knows. I have offered them to four different persons. One asked if my pamphlet was a book of devotions, and did not take it ; another declared he did not know how to read, and took it for his children, on account of the picture on the cover ; the third began to say, 'Yes, so it is, so it is.' Then at the moment when I least expected it, he overwhelmed me with insults and refused it as the others had done ; at last the fourth accepted it, and even with warm thanks, but I do not believe he understood one single word of all I said to him. A dog bit my foot ; a woman at the door of her hut threatened me with her poker, crying, 'How, you rascal, rubbishing Moscow vagabonds ! won't there ever be an end to you ?' And then a soldier on unlimited leave of absence chased me, shouting, 'Hold on, my friend, hold on, we'll settle your business !' And yet he had just got drunk at my expense."

"And then ?"

"And then ? I had on too large a boot, which chafed my foot, and now I am hungry, and my head aches as if it would split from all the brandy and water I've had to take."

"Have you taken much ?"

"No, very little, only enough to start them drinking, but I went into six taverns. But I can't bear that drug brandy ! How can our peasants drink it as they do ? It is inconceivable ! If it is necessary to drink brandy in order to simplify ourselves, then no, thank you !"

"And you say that no one suspected you ?"

"No one. There was one tavern-keeper, however, a big, pale man with light-colored eyes, who looked at me suspi-

ously. I heard him say to his wife, 'Keep your eye on that red-haired fellow—squint!' (I never knew before that I squinted.) 'He is a sharper, see how queerly he drinks.' What queerly meant in this connection I do not know, but it evidently was not a compliment. It was somewhat like the *moветone* (*mauvais ton*) in Gogol's *Revisor*; you remember it. Perhaps it is because I tried to pour my brandy away under the table without any one's seeing me. Ah! what hard work it is for an esthetic to bring himself into contact with real life!"

"You will succeed better next time," said Marianne, to console him; "but I'm glad you look upon your first attempt from the humorous side. On the whole you have not been bored, have you?"

"No, I have even been amused. But I know very well that I shall think it all over again, and that I shall feel very sad and disheartened about it."

"No, no; I shall not let you think about it. I will tell you what I have been doing. They are going to bring up dinner; and I have, in the first place, most beautifully washed the pot in which Tatiana made our cabbage soup. I will tell you all about it, by and by."

She did as she said.

Neshdanof, while listening to what she had to say, looked at her all the time so steadily that she kept pausing to give him time to explain why he looked at her so; but he kept silent. After dinner she proposed that he should let her read aloud something of Spielhagen's, but she had hardly finished the first page when he suddenly rose, came up to her, and fell at her feet. She drew herself up; he embraced her knees with both arms and burst forth in passionate, mad, desperate words: "He wished to die, he felt that he should soon die." She did not stir, she did not resist, she quietly submitted to his violent embrace; she looked down at him with a gentle and even caressing expression.

She placed both her hands upon his head, which he had feverishly buried in the folds of her dress.

But her very quiet affected him more deeply than any efforts to repel him which she might have made. He arose, and said, "Forgive me, Marianne, for what has passed to-

day and yesterday. Tell me again that you are willing to wait until I shall be worthy of your love—and pardon me.”

“I have given you my word and I cannot break it.”

“Thanks—good-by.”

He went out ; Marianne shut herself up in her chamber.

XXX.

A FORTNIGHT afterward, Neshdanof was sitting at his little table writing to his friend Siline by the feeble, dim light of a tallow candle. It was late in the night. On the sofa, on the floor, lay different articles of clothing, soiled, and hastily taken off; a slow, steady rain was beating against the windows, and great puffs of warm air striking at intervals against the roof sounded like deep sighs.

"My dear Vladimir, I write to you without giving my address, and my letter will be given to a messenger to post from a distant spot, for my presence here is a secret; to betray this secret would be to ruin another person with myself. Let it be enough to say that I have been in a large mill with Marianne for a fortnight. We ran away from the Sipiagins the very day I wrote to you. We have received here the hospitality of a friend whom I shall call Vassili; he is in charge of the mill, and is a capital fellow. Our stay here is but temporary. We are waiting for the proper time to act; it is true that, judging from what is going on, the moment is not near. My dear Vladimir, I am very, very sad.

"First, there is something I must tell you; although I ran away with Marianne, we still live as brother and sister. She loves me, and she told me she would be mine—if I ever felt that I had a right to ask it.

"I do not feel that I have the right, my dear Vladimir! She believes in me and in my honesty and I shall not deceive her. I know that I have never loved, and (of this I am very sure) that I shall never love any one more than her. But it makes no difference. How could I link forever her destiny with mine? Join a living being to a corpse, or at least to a half-dead body? What would my conscience say? You will answer, that if my passion were the stronger, my

conscience would keep silence. But, honestly, I'm nothing but a corpse; an honest, well-meaning corpse, if you choose. Now don't say that's only my usual exaggeration. Every word is the truth, the simple truth. Marianne is a very earnest nature; at this moment she has plunged wholly into this work; she believes in it—and I!

"But to leave love, and personal feelings, and all such things.

"For a fortnight I have been living in the midst of the people, and it would be hard to imagine a duller occupation. Certainly it is my fault, and mine alone. I am not a Slavophil; I am not one of those who get strength from the people; I never use them for my own ailments, as if they were a soothing poultice; no, I want rather to act upon them; but how?

"How should we proceed? In fact, when I am with them I can only listen and observe, but if I try to speak, it won't go at all. I remind myself of a bad actor playing too hard a part. A feeling of conscientiousness comes over me at the wrong moment, and then doubt or a wretched instinctive sense of the ridiculous, that I turn against myself.

"It's all worth less than nothing. I'm disgusted with these old clothes that I've put on, with this whole masquerade, as Vassili calls it.

"They say we should begin by studying the language of the people, by learning their ways and habits. That is false, a thousand times false. Have faith, believe in what you say, and speak as you please.

"I had the chance to hear a sort of sermon delivered by a *Raskolnik* prophet.

"Heaven knows what a jumble of biblical phrases, quotations from books, and popular expressions, not even Russian but Little-Russian, pronouncing *t* like *ts*, and *i* for *ê*; and then he kept using the same words over and over again, like a grouse that's calling his mate. 'The spirit has seized me, the spirit has seized me'—but his eyes were like glowing coals, his voice low and powerful, he clenched his fists, he was made of iron, that man! His hearers did not understand a single word, but what veneration, what enthusiasm! and they followed him.

“But as for me, when I begin to speak I’m like a criminal who is begging pardon. Why not turn *Raskolnik*? Their science is soon acquired; but the faith, the faith, where can it be got? Marianne—there is some one who has faith. She’s at work as soon as it’s daylight; she spends her time with Tatiana—a good woman, not at all stupid, and who, let me say in parenthesis, pretends that we want to ‘simplify’ ourselves, and says we are ‘simplified;’ well, she passes her time with this Tatiana; she’s always about and active, running around like an ant.

“She is delighted that her hands are becoming red and hard, and she is always awaiting the moment of climbing the scaffold if it should be necessary. And as for me, when I try to talk to her about my feelings, I have a sort of feeling of shame; it seems to me that I am putting my hands on another’s property, and then that look! oh, that terrible look, submissive and humble, as if saying, ‘I am yours if you choose—but remember! and, what is the use? Is there nothing better and loftier in the world?’

“Which means, in other words, ‘Put on a dirty caftan and go among the people!’

“Oh, how I curse my nervousness, my delicate senses, my susceptibility to impressions, my disgust at trifles, all this heritage from an aristocratic father! What right had he to call me into being, with organs out of harmony with the sphere in which I was fated to live? To give birth to a bird and throw it into the water! To beget a man of taste and hurl him into the mire! Create a democrat, a friend of the people, who is sickened by the mere smell of vodka!

“But don’t let me go so far as to blame my own father! For if I’m a democrat it’s my fault and not his.

“Yes, Vladimir, things are going ill. Evil, gloomy ideas haunt me. But, you will ask, is it possible that during this fortnight you haven’t come across anything or any person, ignorant, it may be, but loyal and genuine, to bring you consolation?

“What answer shall I make? I have, in fact, had some such experience. I have stumbled on a capital fellow, of an excellent and energetic character. But all I could do,

pamphlets and all, have been absolutely useless. Paul, a workman, in the factory (he is a very bright and intelligent young man, who is Vassili's right hand, and will be foreman in time—I believe I spoke of him above), has a friend, a young man, Elisarius—a pretty name, isn't it?—a clear-headed fellow, open-hearted, and honest as the day; well, as soon as we talk together, there seems to be a wall between us; he looks at me as if he were saying, 'No, no.'

"There was some one else I met, he belonged to the more violent kind; 'Now, don't talk so much, sir,' he said; 'just one word—do you want, yes or no, to give us all the land you own?' 'Come, come,' I answered; 'what makes you think that I'm a proprietor?' (I remember saying 'God bless you' to myself.) 'But if you belong to the people,' he answered, 'what's the good of all this stuff you're talking? Leave me alone, please.'

"I have noticed one thing: those who like to listen and take the pamphlets without being urged, you may be sure are poor creatures, 'doubled up by wind,' as they say with us. Or else you come across some fine talker, some fellow with a scrap of education, whose whole learning consists in using continually one and the same word, his favorite word. One of them annoyed me terribly with the word 'pruduction.' To everything I said he answered, 'Oh, yes, it's the 'pruduction.' It was frightful! One thing more: do you remember a long time ago there used to be a good deal said about men who were *de trop*, of the Hamlets? Well, only think of it, there are just such people among the peasants, only of course, with a peculiar color of their own. Most of them have an unhealthy complexion. They are rather interesting people, moreover, who are always glad to listen to you; but as for action, they are not worth a kopeck, they are just like the Hamlets of former days.

"What can we do, then? Establish a secret printing-press? But what is the use? There are plenty of pamphlets; we have some which tell the peasant, 'Make the sign of the cross and grasp your ax!' and nothing else. Write novels on the subject, which shall be drawn from actual models? Perhaps no one would print them. Must we really take an ax? But against whom? With whom? Why? That a

government soldier may shoot you down with a government musket? But that would only be a complicated form of suicide. If I'd got to that point, I'd rather kill myself with my own hands. I could at least choose the time and manner and place at which to aim the muzzle of my pistol.

"To tell the truth, it seems to me that if there were anywhere no matter where, a rising of the people, I would take part in it, not so much to free whoever it might be (freeing other people when we are not free ourselves!), but to finish with it once for all.

"Our friend Vassili, who has taken us in here, is a happy man; he is one of us, but how calm he is! nothing disturbs him. If he were any one else, I should have said all sorts of disagreeable things to him—but with him it's impossible. The real truth is, that a man's character is everything. His opinions nothing. Vassili has a character in which one picks no flaws; and he is right!

"He passes long hours with Marianne and me. Strangely enough, I love her and she loves me (don't laugh, this is the simple truth), and I have nothing to say to her, while she talks and discusses with him and listens to everything he says. I'm not at all jealous of him; he is taking measures to get a place for her, at least she is all the time asking him to do so; but I am full of bitterness whenever I look at them. Yet I need only say the word marriage, and she would accept at once, and Father Zossime would come upon the stage, and we should hear the opening chorus, 'Isaiah, enter into happiness!'* In short, the whole thing. But I should not be any happier, and there would be absolutely nothing changed. There is no escape from my situation. Oh yes, life has cut me from too scant a pattern, as our drunken tailor used to say, do you remember, when he was complaining about his wife?

"Besides, I know this can't last long. I'm sure there's something brewing.

"Didn't I ask for immediate action? haven't I proved that we must begin? Well, we shall begin.

"I don't know whether I spoke to you of another compan-

* Marriage hymn sung in the churches.

ion I have, a relation of the Sipiagins? He is preparing for us a mess which will be hard to swallow.

"I meant to finish my letter; but, how can I help it? whatever I may be doing, I scribble verses. I don't read them to Marianne, she doesn't care for them; you praise them sometimes, and what is more, you never speak of them to any one else. I have been struck by something that happens all over Russia. But here are the lines:

"SLEEP.

"It was long since I had seen the place of my birth, but I found there no change. Deathlike torpor, absence of thought, roofless houses, ruined walls, filth, and vileness, and poverty, and misery, the insolent or sullen looks of slaves, all is as before. Our people has become free, and its hand, as of yore, hangs powerless by its side. Nothing, nothing is changed. In one respect alone have we surpassed Europe, Asia, the whole world. No, my dear fellow-countrymen have never slept so terrible a sleep.

"Every one is asleep: everywhere in the village, the city, in the tlega, the sleigh, day and night, sitting and standing—the merchant, the *tchinovnik* sleeps; in his tower sleeps the watchman, under the cold of the snows, beneath the heat of the sun. And the criminal sleeps, and the judge slumbers; the peasants are sleeping the sleep of death; they gather in the harvest, they toil in the fields—they sleep; they thresh the corn, still sleeping; father, mother, and children all asleep. He who beats and he who is beaten, both sleep. The tavern alone is awake, its eye always open. And clasping between its five fingers a jug of brandy, its head toward the North Pole, its feet at the Caucasus, sleeps in an eternal sleep—Russia, the holy country!"

"Please excuse me; I did not mean to send you such a sad letter without giving you something to laugh at, at least at the end (you have probably noticed some bad rhymes—Pshaw!).

"When shall I write you again? And shall I write to you? Whatever may happen, I am sure you will not forget

"Your faithful friend,

"A. N.

"P. S.—Yes, our people sleep. But I imagine that if anything is to wake them up, it will not be what we think."

When he had reached the end, Neshdanof threw down his pen and said to himself, "Now try to go to sleep, and to forget all this nonsense, rhymester!"

He went to bed, but sleep was long in coming.

The next morning Marianne woke him up by going through his room to go to Tatiana; but he had scarcely had time to dress himself, when he saw her come back with pleasure and excitement on her face; she seemed very much moved.

"Do you know, Alexis, they say that in the district of T——, close by here, it's already begun?"

"Begun! Who has begun? Who told you?"

"Paul. They say the peasants have risen; that they are unwilling to pay the taxes; that they are forming mobs."

"Did you hear that with your own ears?"

"Tatiana told me. But here's Paul; you can ask him."

Paul entered, and confirmed what Marianne had said.

"There is trouble in the district of T——, that's sure," said he, shaking his beard, and snapping his bright, dark eyes. "It's Markelof's work, probably. He hasn't been home for five days."

Neshdanof took his cap.

"Where are you going?" asked Marianne.

"But—over there," he answered, frowning, without raising his eyes; "to the district of T——."

"So am I, then. You'll take me, of course. Just give me time to get a handkerchief to throw over my head."

"It's not a woman's work," answered Neshdanof gloomily, his eyes cast down, with a sort of irritated air.

"No, no! you are right to go, otherwise Markelof might take you for a coward. But I shall go with you."

"I'm not a coward," said Neshdanof, in the same gloomy way.

"I meant he would take us both for cowards. I'm going with you."

Marianne went to her room to get her handkerchief. Paul uttered a "ho, ho!" of anxiety, and at once disappeared. He ran to carry Solomine word.

Before Marianne had got back, Solomine came into the room. Neshdanof was standing before the window, his

head on his arm, and his arm on the window. Solomine tapped him on the shoulder. He turned quickly ; his dishevelled beard and hair—he had not finished dressing—gave him a wild, strange appearance.

Solomine had also changed in this last fortnight ; he had grown sallow, his face was drawn, his upper lip was raised slightly so as to show his teeth. He too seemed troubled, so far at least as a well-balanced mind can be troubled.

“Markelof couldn't restrain himself,” he said. “That may end badly for him in the first place—and for others—”

“I want to see what it amounts to—” interrupted Neshdanof.

“So do I,” added Marianne, as she appeared on the threshold.

Solomine turned slowly toward her.

“I shouldn't advise you to, Marianne. You might betray yourself and us too, without meaning it and without any need. Let Neshdanof go and scent it out, if he chooses—not too near, however ! But why should you go ?”

“I don't want to let him go alone.”

“You would be in his way.”

Marianne looked at Neshdanof. He was standing motionless, his face, too, was motionless and dejected.

“But if there's danger ?” she urged.

Solomine smiled.

“You can be easy ; when there's danger I shall let you go.”

Marianne took off the handkerchief from her head, and sat down.

Then Solomine turned toward Neshdanof. “And you, my friend,” he said seriously, somewhat thoughtfully. “It's possible all this has been exaggerated ; at any rate I beg that you will be prudent. I'm going to send some one to show you the way. You'll promise, Neshdanof ? You'll promise ?”

“Yes.”

“Without fail ?”

“Yes, since every one here has to obey you, beginning with Marianne.”

Neshdanof went out into the hall without taking leave. Paul emerged from a dark corner, and ran down the staircase ahead of him, with his hob-nailed boots clattering loudly. It was he who was to go with Neshdanof.

Solomine sat down by Marianne.

"You heard what Neshdanof just said?"

"Yes, he's vexed because I obey you and not him. That is true. I love him, but I mind you. He is dearer to me, you are nearer."

Solomine gently caressed her hand.

"It's a very disagreeable matter," he said, at last. "If Markelof is concerned in it, he is ruined."

Marianne shuddered.

"Ruined!"

"Yes. He never does anything half way; he won't hide behind others."

"Ruined!" murmured Marianne, again, and tears rolled down her cheeks. "Ah, Solomine, how sorry I am for him! But why should he not be successful? Why must he necessarily be ruined?"

"Because in enterprises of this sort, even if they are successful, those in advance always fall. But in this he has just tried, it's not only all of the first or the second rank who perish, it's the tenth, and the twentieth—"

"Then we shall never complete it!"

"What you are dreaming of? never. We shall never see that with our eyes, our bodily eyes. Oh, with those of the mind its very different. We can give ourselves the pleasure of seeing it. There's nothing to prevent that."

"But then, Solomine, tell me—"

"What?"

"Why do you walk in that road?"

"Because there is no other. To speak more plainly, Markelof and I have the same end in view, but our roads are different."

"Poor Markelof," said Marianne, sorrowfully.

Solomine began again gently to caress her hand. "Come, come, there's nothing positive. Let us wait to hear what Paul will have to say. In our work, we must be brave. The English have a saying, 'Never say die.' It's a good

proverb, better than the Russian one, 'When misfortune has entered throw the door wide open.' Why borrow trouble?"

Solomine arose.

"And the place you were going to get for me?" asked Marianne suddenly.

Tears were still glistening on her cheeks, but there was no sadness in her eyes.

Solomine sat down again.

"Are you in a great hurry to get away from here?"

"Oh, no, but I want to be of use."

"Marianne, you are very useful here. Don't leave us; wait. What do you want?" he asked of Tatiana, who was entering the room.

"There's a female asking for Neshdanof," answered Tatiana, laughing, and swinging her arms. "I was just about to say to her that there was no one of that name here, and never had been. But just then she—"

"Who?"

"This female. When she saw that, she wrote her name on this piece of paper and told me to show it to you, and then you would let her in, and that if Neshdanof was not at home, she could wait."

On the paper was written, in large letters, Mashurina.

"Show her in," said Solomine. "It won't discom-mo-
mode you, will it, Marianne, if she comes in here? She is one of us."

"Not at all."

In a few moments they saw Mashurina crossing the threshold, dressed exactly as we have seen her in the first chapter.

XXXI.

“ISN'T Neshdanof at home?” she asked. Then recognizing Solomine she went up towards him, and held out her hand, “How are you, Solomine?” She merely glanced at Marianne.

“He'll be back soon,” said Solomine. “But let me ask who told you?”

“Markelof. Besides there are two or three persons in the town who know already.”

“Really?”

“Yes. Some one has blabbed. It seems Neshdanof has been recognized.”

“That's the great advantage of disguises,” muttered Solomine. “Let me introduce you to one another,” he added aloud, “Miss Sinetsky, Miss Mashurina. Take a chair.”

Mashurina nodded her head slightly, and sat down.

“I have a letter for Neshdanof, and a verbal question for you, Solomine.”

“What is it? and from whom?”

“From some one you know. Is all ready here?”

“Nothing is ready.”

Mashurina opened her little eyes as wide as she could.

“Nothing?”

“Nothing.”

“Absolutely nothing?”

“Absolutely nothing.”

“That is my answer?”

“Exactly.”

Mashurina pensively took a cigarette from her pocket.

“Can you give me a light?”

“Here is a match.”

Mashurina lit her cigarette.

"*They* expected something very different," she resumed. "In the suburbs it's not like this. After all, that's your affair. I came for only a moment to see Neshdanof and give him the letter."

"Where are you going?"

"A long distance."

In fact she was starting for Geneva, but she did not want to tell Solomine, of whom she did not feel sure, to say nothing of the outsider who was there. They sent Mashurina to Geneva, although she knew only a few words of German, to carry to a person whom she did not know, a piece of pasteboard on which was drawn a raisin, with two hundred and seventy-nine silver rubles.

"And Ostrodumof, where is he? with you?"

"No. He's not far off. He stopped on the way. But he'll come when he's wanted. You can be sure of Pimen."

"How did you get here?"

"In a telega, of course; give me another match."

Solomine gave her a burning match.

"Mr. Solomine," whispered a voice behind the door, "come here, please."

"Who's there? What is it?"

"Come, please," the voice repeated persuasively and urgently. "There are some strange workmen with something to say, and Paul isn't there."

Solomine arose and went out.

Mashurina stared so at Marianne that the poor girl became quite embarrassed.

"Excuse me," Mashurina began in her harsh, jerky voice, "I'm perfectly plain, and I don't know how to begin. Don't be angry, and don't answer unless you please. Are you the young lady who ran away from the Sipiagins?"

Marianne, though somewhat nonplussed, answered:

"I am."

"With Neshdanof?"

"Why, yes."

"Give me your hand, please. You will excuse me. You must be good, since he loves you."

Marianne pressed Mashurina's hand, saying:

"You know him well?"

"I know him. I used to see him at Petersburg. That's why I speak to you about him. Markelof also told me—"

"Ah, Markelof? Have you seen him recently?"

"Quite recently. Just now, he's not at home."

"Where has he gone?"

"Where he was ordered to go."

Marianne sighed.

"Ah, Madame, Mashurina, I'm alarmed about him."

"In the first place I'm not 'madame;' all these graces have to be thrown aside. And then, don't say you're alarmed. You should not be. We need not be alarmed about ourselves or about others. We should take no thought for ourselves, and have no fears. It's all useless, but I consider—I consider that it is not hard for me, Mashurina, to talk in this way. I am ugly. But you, you are pretty, so it's a great deal harder for you." Mashurina bowed her head and turned away. "Markelof said to me—he knew that I had a letter for Neshdanof—he said to me, 'Don't go to the mill, don't carry that letter; you'll be a kill-joy. Leave them alone! They are both happy over there—so much the better, don't disturb them!' I did not want to disturb you—but what could I do with the letter?"

"You must give it to him without fail," cried Marianne.

"But what a kind heart Markelof has! Do you really think he'll get killed or sent to Siberia?"

"Why, what difference does it make? Don't people come back from Siberia? As for losing his life—some person's lives are happy, other's bitter. Markelof's hasn't been made out of refined sugar."

Mashurina again gave Marianne an intense, scrutinizing glance.

"It's true, you are a beauty," she exclaimed at last, "you are as pretty as a bird. But Alexis doesn't come back. I've a great mind to give you the letter. Why should I wait?"

"I will give it to him, without fail, you may be sure."

Mashurina rested her cheek on the palm of her hand, and remained silent for a long time.

"Tell me—excuse the question—do you love him very much?"

"Yes."

Mashurina shook her big head.

"I don't need to ask if he loves you. Well, I'm off; I mustn't be late. You'll tell him that I've been here—that I've left messages for him. Tell him Mashurina was here. You will remember my name? Yes, Mashurina. And the letter—wait a moment, where did I put it?"

Mashurina arose and turned away as if to feel in her pockets, and at the same time she put into her mouth a little paper pellet, which she swallowed.

"Oh, heavens! how stupid I am. Can I have lost it? I have, really. Oh, what a pity! If any one were to find it—no, I really haven't it with me. So it's settled the way Markelof wanted it."

"Look again," murmured Marianne.

Mashurina made a gesture with her hand.

"No, what's the use. It's really lost."

Marianne went up to her.

"Well, kiss me, then."

Mashurina suddenly put her arms around her, and pressed her to her bosom with almost a man's strength.

"There's no one else I should have done that for," said she, in a low voice; "it's against my conscience; it's the only time. Tell him to be prudent; and you, too, take care. This place will soon be dangerous, dangerous for every one. Go, both of you, before that time comes. Good-by!" she added roughly, in a loud voice; "and then tell him—no, don't tell him anything!"

Mashurina went out, slamming the door after her, and Marianne was left standing alone and pensive in the middle of her room.

"What does it all mean?" she said at last. "Why, this woman loves him more than I do. And why did she tell me all this? And why did Solomine go out and not come back?"

She began to walk up and down; a strange feeling, made up of vexation, grief, and stupor, took possession of her. Why had she not gone with Neshdanof? It was Solomine

who had dissuaded her—but he, where was he? What is going on around her? It was evidently out of pity for Neshdanof, that Mashurina had not given her that dangerous letter. But how could she be guilty of such disobedience? Did she want to display her generosity? But what right had she? And why was she, Marianne, so touched by it? And was she really touched?

An ugly woman who was interested in a young man—was there, after all, anything so surprising in that? And why should Mashurina suppose that Marianne's attachment for Neshdanof was stronger than her sense of duty? Marianne did not at all desire this sacrifice. And what could there have been in the letter? A call for immediate action? Well, what then?

And Markelof? He is in danger—and we, what are we doing? Markelof spares us both; he gives a chance to be happy together. Is this, too, generosity or—contempt?

So we have only left that odious house to be together and coo like turtle-doves.

Such were Marianne's thoughts, and her feeling of annoyance only increased at every moment. Besides, her vanity was wounded. Why should they all, *all*, keep away from her? This stout woman had called her "a bird," a "pretty girl"—why not a doll, in so many words? And why had not Neshdanof gone off alone? Why had Paul gone with him? Did he need some one to take care of him? And Solomine, what were his real views? There was nothing of the revolutionist about him. Would any one imagine by any chance that she considered it all a game?

These were the thoughts that were chasing one another confusedly in Marianne's brain. With tightly closed lips, and her arms folded, like a man, she sat down by the window and was again still, without even leaning against the back of her chair; she was all tense, alert, ready to spring. She did not want to go and work with Tatiana, she wanted to do only one thing—wait. And she waited with a sort of raging obstinacy.

At times her feelings seemed to her strange and incomprehensible—but so much the worse! Once it even passed through her head that possibly jealousy was the cause of it

all. But when she remembered poor Mashurina's face, she shrugged her shoulders and made a gesture with her hand, as if she was pushing something away, not in fact, but by a corresponding mental action.

Marianne had a long time to wait. At last she heard the steps of two persons coming up the stairs. She turned her eyes to the door ; the steps drew near. The door opened, and Neshdanof, supported by Paul's arm, appeared on the threshold.

He was deadly pale and bare-headed ; his disheveled hair was hanging in damp locks over his forehead ; his eyes looked straight before him without seeing anything. Paul carried him across the room (Neshdanof's limp, inert, tottering legs were dragging behind him) and sat him down on a sofa.

Marianne sprang from her chair.

"What is it ? What has happened ? Is he sick ?"

But Paul, after he put Neshdanof down, answered over his shoulder with a smile,

"Don't be frightened, it will pass off—it's only that he's not used to it."

"But what is it ?" insisted Marianne.

"He's a little tipsy ; he drank on an empty stomach ; that's all."

Marianne bent over Neshdanof. He was half lying down on the sofa ; his head was bent forward over his chest, his eyes were wandering, his breath was reeking with brandy ; he was drunk.

"Alexis !" she exclaimed, involuntarily. He managed to raise his heavy eyelids and tried to smile.

"Ah, Marianne," he stammered, "you always said sim—sim—simplified ; now I'm simplified. Since the people are always drunk—you understand—"

He stopped, then murmured a few more unintelligible words, closed his eyes and fell asleep. Paul arranged him comfortably on the sofa.

"Don't distress yourself, Miss Marianne," he repeated, "he'll sleep for a couple of hours, and then he'll be as good as new."

Marianne wanted to ask how it happened, but her ques-

tion would have detained Paul, and she wanted to be alone, or rather she did not want Paul to see him in this plight before her. She went off toward the window. Paul, who perceived it all in a moment, carefully wrapped up Neshdanof's feet in the tails of his castan, put a little pillow under his head, said once more, "It's nothing," and crept out of the room on tip-toe.

Marianne went back. Neshdanof's head had sunk into the pillow ; there was a steady tension on his face, which was as pale as that of a very sick man.

"How did it happen?" she thought.

XXXII.

THIS is the way it happened.

When he sat down in the telega by the side of Paul, Neshdanof suddenly became very much excited. They had hardly got out from the court-yard into the road, and started in the direction of T——, when he began to call out and stop the passing peasants, and to address them with remarks as brief as they were incoherent.

“Hulloh !” he shouted, “are you asleep? Get up! the hour has come. Down with taxation; down with the proprietors !”

Some of the peasants stared at him with surprise, others went on their way without paying any attention to what he said; they thought he was drunk. One of them, when he reached home, said he had met a Frenchman lisping something in his jargon, he didn't know what.

Neshdanof was quite able to understand how ridiculous and even stupid his conduct was; but gradually he worked himself up into such a state that he lost the power of distinguishing what was reasonable from what was absurd.

Paul did his best to calm him, saying, “Come, come; you can't go on like that,” and tried to make it clear to him that they would soon arrive at the first large village on the other side of the boundary line of the district of T——, and that then they could make inquiries. But Neshdanof paid no attention, and meanwhile his face wore an expression of almost desperate sadness.

Their horse was a sturdy, round little beast, with the mane trimmed close upon its arched neck. It kept its strong little legs in active motion, and pulled perpetually on the reins, as if it thought it was driven by some one who was in a great hurry.

After they had reached the above-mentioned village, Neshdanof saw eight peasants standing near the road be-

fore the door of an empty barn. He sprang at once from the telega, ran up to them, and for five minutes he held forth to them with a speech which was continually interrupted by sudden cries accompanied by wild gestures.

The words, "Liberty ! Forward ! Shoulder to shoulder !" shouted in a high, husky voice, rose above a number of others which could not be clearly made out.

The peasants who had assembled before the barn to see about putting some wheat into it, even if only a sample (it was the communal granary, hence empty), stared at Neshdanof and seemed to listen to him very attentively ; but, probably, they did not understand very much, for when at last he turned and ran back with a parting cry of "Liberty !" one of them, the cleverest of all, nodded his head wisely and said, "How severe he is !" and another added, "He must be one of the leaders." To which the clever peasant replied, "Certainly, or else he wouldn't be rasping his throat in that way. We must look out for our money ; they'll be taking it out of us."

Neshdanof, when he got into the telega again and sat down by Paul, said to himself, "Good God, what stuff and nonsense ! But after all no one knows exactly how to arouse the people ; perhaps that's the way. There's no time to think about that. So much the worse. That's not what was wanted ; but so much the worse still. We must go on."

They drove into the village street. In the middle of it, just before the tavern door, there was assembled quite a large number of peasants. Paul tried to restrain Neshdanof, but he had jumped quickly from the telega, and crying, "Brothers !" he had forced his way into the crowd.

They made room for him, and Neshdanof began a new speech, without looking at any one, in a voice both fierce and lachrymose.

But the consequences were very different from those of his speech before the barn. A huge fellow, with a smooth but villainous face, wearing a short, greasy, half pelisse, high boots, and a sheep-skin cap, walked up to Neshdanof, and clapped him heavily on the shoulder.

"You are right ! You are a good fellow !" he roared,

with a voice of thunder ; “ but hold on, don’t you know that talking’s dry work ? Come this way, we can have our talk out a great deal better.”

He led Neshdanof into the tavern ; the whole crowd followed tumultuously.

“ Mikheitch,” shouted the big fellow, “ ten kopecks’ worth of brandy, you know my drink ! I’m treating a friend. The devil knows where he comes from or whom he belongs to, but he’s pitching into the noblemen. Drink ! ” he said to Neshdanof, offering him a large, heavy, full glass, all damp on the outside, as if with perspiration. “ Drink, for you mean well by us ! ”

“ Drink ! ” roared the crowd.

Neshdanof seized the glass—he was almost choking, and cried :

“ To your health, boys ! ”

And he drained it to the last drop.

Ugh ! he swallowed it with the resolution of despair, as he would have marched up to a battery or to a line of bayonets. But, heavens, what has happened ? Something struck him down his back and legs, burned his throat, and chest, and stomach, and brought tears to his eyes—a qualm of nausea, which he could hardly conquer, ran over his whole body. He shouted as loud as he could the first thing that came into his head, to dull that terrible feeling. Everything in the dingy tavern became hot, choking, stifling. And how many people there were !

He began to talk, to talk at great length, and to shout with wild fury, and to clasp big horny hands, and kiss sticky beards. The big, hulking fellow hugged him and nearly broke his ribs. He was a real monster. “ I’ll tear open the throat,” he roared, “ of the first man who does any harm to our brothers. I’ll give him a lick on the top of the head. You’ll hear him yell. I know how to do it. I’ve been a butcher, I have. I know that business.”

With these words he held out his huge, red fist, covered with patches of freckles, and suddenly, good Lord ! a voice shouted again, “ Drink ! ” and Neshdanof swallowed another draught of the vile poison.

But this time the effect was terrible. It was as if iron

hooks were tearing him inside, his head began to spin, green circles were turning before his eyes.

There was a ringing in his ears—a roar. Horror—a third glass! Is it possible that he swallowed it? Red noses flew toward him; dusty heads of hair, sunburned necks, furrowed, scarred throats. Hairy hands took hold of him. “Come, finish your speech!” shouted wild voices. “Come, speak! Day before yesterday a stranger, like you, told us lots of things. Go on! you four-legged son of a sea cook!”

The earth waved beneath Neshdanof’s feet. His voice sounded strange to him, as if some one else were speaking. Could he be dead?

Suddenly the fresh air struck his face; there was more hustling, more red faces glared at him, more of the stench of brandy, of sheepskin, of leather, and tar. He found himself sitting in the telega by the side of Paul. His first thought was to get out, shouting:

“Where are you going? Stop! I haven’t had a chance to explain anything.”

Then he added, addressing Paul:

“And you yourself, you odd fish, you sly dog, what are your opinions?”

And Paul answered, “It would be perfect, if there were no masters and if the whole world belonged to us, of course. But, up to the present time, there has been no ukase ordering that.” And, while he was talking, he quietly turned the telega round; suddenly he shook the reins over the horse’s back, and they started away from the crowd and uproar toward the mill.

Neshdanof was half asleep; his body fell to the right and to the left. The wind blew pleasantly on his face and dispelled his gloomy thoughts.

Only one thing pained him: that he had not expounded his ideas—but again the wind caressed his burning cheek.

Then, the appearance of Marianne—a momentary but scorching sensation of shame—and then a deadly stupor.

Paul told Solomine the whole story. He even confessed that he had not kept Neshdanof from drinking—for it was the only way he could get out of the tavern. The peasants would not have let him go.

"When he was overcome by the brandy, I said to the peasants, with a great many bows, 'Come, my good fellows, let the boy go ; see how young he is !' They let him go ; but they asked for half a ruble for ransom, and I gave it to them."

"That was right," said Solomine.

Neshdanof was sleeping, and Marianne was sitting by the window looking at the garden-walk.

Singularly enough, the evil thoughts and feelings which had been agitating her before Neshdanof's arrival had suddenly left her. Neshdanof did not inspire her with repulsion or disgust ; she only pitied him.

She knew perfectly well that he was not dissipated or a drunkard ; and she was wondering what friendly speech she could make to him when he would wake up, to save him from shame and grief.

"Yes," she said to herself, "I must manage to get him to tell me how it happened."

She was not agitated, but she was sad, very sad. It seemed to herself that she had breathed in a puff of the real atmosphere that surrounded the unknown world into which she yearned to plunge, and this grossness, these dark shadows made her tremble. To what Moloch was she about to sacrifice herself ?

But no, that was impossible ; this was a mere incident, everything would soon be as before. It was a passing impression, that had struck her with such force simply because it was so unexpected.

Marianne arose and walked to the sofa on which Neshdanof was lying, and with her handkerchief she wiped his pale forehead, which was contracted as if with pain even while he was sleeping, and she pushed back the young man's hair.

She began to pity him as a mother pities a sick child. But he was a painful sight, and she went back quietly to her own room, leaving the door between open.

She did not take up any work to occupy her hands, she sat down and fell into the same revery. She felt the time creep by, moment by moment, and this gave her pleasure, and her heart was beating as if she expected something.

Where was Solomine all this time ?

The door creaked softly and Tatiana came in.

"What do you want ?" asked Marianne, with an irritated start.

"Marianne," said Tatiana, in a low voice, "see here ; don't distress yourself about this ! it might happen to anybody, and besides it's lucky that he—"

"I'm not distressing myself at all, Tatiana. Neshdanof is not very well ; there's nothing very serious."

"Oh, so much the better ! That's what I said to myself ; Marianne doesn't come, what can be the matter ? But at the same time I shouldn't have come, because my rule in these cases is always 'mind your own business'—only there is a man just come to the mill, I don't know who he is. He's sort of lame, very short, and he insists on seeing Neshdanof. What does it mean ? This morning that woman—now this lame fellow ! And when I said that Neshdanof was not here, he asked for Solomine. 'I must see some one,' he says, 'because I've come on very serious business.' We tried to send him off, like that woman, by telling him that Solomine was not here, that he'd gone out ; but the fellow said, 'I shan't go ; I'll stay till night if need be.' And he's walking up and down the courtyard. There, come out into the hall ; you can look out of the window and see if you know him."

Marianne went out with Tatiana ; as she passed by Neshdanof she noticed once more the painful contraction of his brow, which she once more wiped with her handkerchief.

Through the dust upon the narrow window she saw the visitor ; it was no one she knew.

But at that moment Solomine came around from behind the house. The little lame man went quickly up to him, holding out his hand. Solomine took it. Evidently he knew him. Then they both disappeared.

But steps could be heard upon the staircase. They were coming up.

Marianne went back quickly to her room, and stopped when she got fairly into it, breathing with difficulty. She was afraid—of what ? She did not know.

Solomine thrust his head in at the door.

“Marianne, let me come in. I bring some one whom it is absolutely necessary that you should see.”

Marianne merely nodded assent, as she saw, following Solomine, Pakline come in.

XXXIII.

“I’M a friend of your husband,” said Pakline, making Marianne a very deep bow as if he were trying to hide his face from her, agitated as it was by anxiety and fear, “and I’m a friend of Solomine. Neshdanof is asleep, he’s not very well, I understand. I’m sorry to say I bring bad news, part of which I’ve had time to tell Solomine, and in consequence certain decisive measures will have to be taken.”

Pakline’s voice kept failing him, like that of a man whose mouth is dry with thirst.

The news he brought was indeed bad. Markelof had been captured by the peasants and carried to the town. Goloushkine’s clerk had informed upon his master, who had been arrested. Goloushkine, in his turn, was giving all the information he could, and telling everything he knew; he proposed to join the Greek Church, and had given the Gymnasium a portrait of Philaretos, the Metropolitan; he had already sent five thousand rubles to be divided among the invalid soldiers. There could be no doubt that he had told about Neshdanof. At any moment the police might make a descent upon the mill.

Solomine too was in danger.

“As for me,” added Pakline, “only one thing surprises me, and that is, that I am allowed to go about freely; it is true that I never took any serious interest in politics, and that I never attended a meeting. In a word, I have taken advantage of the forgetfulness or the carelessness of the police to come and warn you, and to talk over what is to be done to—to avoid complications.”

Marianne listened to all Pakline had to say. She was not frightened; she was even very calm. But Pakline was right; something must be done. The first thing she did was to look at Solomine.

He, too, seemed composed, save that the muscles of his lips quivered imperceptibly ; he no longer smiled as usual.

Solomine understood the meaning of Marianne's glance ; she was waiting for what he should say, in order to follow his advice.

"It's a very ticklish matter," he began. "Neshdanof would do well, I think, to go off for a time. But by the way, Mr. Pakline, how did you know that he was here?"

Pakline waved his hand.

"It's some one who met him on one of his excursions one day when he was making speeches in the neighborhood. This person follows him, not with any evil intention, I should say ; he's one of us. But I really think," he went on, turning to Marianne, "that our friend Neshdanof has been very, very imprudent."

"Reproaches are of no use now," said Solomine ; "I'm sorry we can't settle on anything at once ; but by to-morrow he will be better, and the police are not so active as you imagine. And you too, Marianne, you must go with him."

"Of course," answered Marianne, in a low but firm voice.

"Yes," answered Solomine ; "we must reflect and choose the place and the means."

"Let me suggest to you," began Pakline, "an idea which occurred to me as I was driving here. Let me first tell you, though, that I sent my coachman back when I was a verst from the mill."

"What is your idea ?" asked Solomine.

"It's this : you'll give me some horses, and I'll go at once to the Sipiagins."

"To the Sipiagins !" repeated Marianne. "Why there ?"

"You'll see."

"But do you know them ?"

"Not at all ; but listen. Consider my idea carefully. It seems to me like an inspiration of genius. Markelof is Sipiagin's brother-in-law, his wife's brother, isn't he ? Well, don't you think he will do something to save him and Neshdanof ? Granting that Sipiagin is angry with him, that

does not alter the fact that Neshdanof has become a relation of his by marrying you. And the danger hanging over our friend—"

"I'm not married," said Marianne.

Pakline started with surprise.

"What! all this time you haven't yet? Pshaw!" he added, "it will do no harm to lie a little; at any rate, you will get married. But seriously, you can't find anything better than my plan. You will notice that up to the present time Sipiagin has not made any search for you. That shows that he has a certain generosity—I notice the word displeases you—a certain pretense of generosity. Why not take advantage of it under present circumstances? Tell me."

Marianne raised her head and ran her hand through her hair.

"You can do anything you please for Markelof, Mr. Pakline, or for yourself; but neither Alexis nor I can endure Mr. Sipiagin's interference or protection. We have not run away from his house to go back and knock at his door like beggars. We have nothing to do with the generosity or the pretense of generosity of Mr. Sipiagin or his wife."

"Those are very commendable sentiments," answered Pakline, who thought to himself, 'That's rather a damper,—' "although, on the other hand, if you consider—at any rate I'm ready to do as you say. I shall try to help only Markelof, our good Markelof. But let me say, nevertheless, that he is related to Sipiagin only through his wife, whereas you—"

"Mr. Pakline, I beg of you."

"Certainly!—certainly!—but I can't help feeling sorry, for Sipiagin has so much influence."

"And aren't you uneasy about yourself?" asked Solomine.

Pakline bridled up.

"In a time like the present, one cannot think of one's self," he answered proudly.

In fact it was about himself that he was thinking in all his projects.

Poor, feeble, little creature that he was, he wanted to get the start of the others, like the hare in the fable.

In exchange for the services he had rendered him; Sipia-gin might, in case of trouble, say a word in his favor. For, in truth, whatever he might say, Pakline felt that he was compromised, he had listened—and he had even spoken.

"Your plan," said Solomine at last, "doesn't seem to be a bad one, although, to tell the truth, I think there is very little chance of its succeeding. At any rate, one can but try. Whatever happens, you can't do any harm."

"Exactly! Taking the most unfavorable view, suppose they kick me out of the house—where is the harm?"

"Yes, that would do no harm."

"Thank you!" thought Pakline. Solomine went on, "What time is it? Past four? There's no time to lose. You shall have forces at once. Paul!"

But instead of Paul, it was Neshdanof who came to the door. He could not stand straight, and he was obliged to hold one of the door-posts; his lips were opened feebly, and he was gazing anxiously forward. He did not understand what was going on.

Pakline first went up to him.

"Alexis," he said, "you remember me?"

Neshdanof looked at him, half shutting his eyes.

"Pakline?" he said at last.

"Yes, yes; it is I. You are not well?"

"No—I'm not very well. But—what are you doing here?"

"I?"

But at that moment Marianne lightly touched Pakline's elbow. He turned round and saw that she was making signs. "Oh, yes," he murmured, "that's true."

"I've come, Alexis," he resumed aloud, "on important business, and I'm off at once to continue my journey. Solomine will tell you all about it, and Marianne, Miss Marianne. It's something that concerns us all, that is to say—no, no," he added noticing Marianne's sign and glance, "it's something about Markelof, our friend Markelof alone. But good-by, time is precious, good-by, my friend. We shall

meet soon. Mr. Solomine, will you be good enough to come with me to see about the horses?"

"Very well, Marianne. I wanted to tell you to be courageous, but I see it ain't necessary. You are of the right stamp."

"Oh, yes, oh, yes!" added Pakline approvingly. "You're like a Roman matron of the time of Cato, of Cato of Utica! But come along, Mr. Solomine, come along!"

"You have plenty of time," said Solomine with an indifferent smile.

Neshdanof shrunk to one side to let them pass by, but it was evident that he did not understand anything that was said. Then he stepped forward a couple of paces and dropped gently into a chair, in front of Marianne.

"Alexis," she said, "everything has been found out; Markelof has been seized by the peasants, whom he was trying to incite to revolution; he has been put in the jail at S——, as well as that merchant you dined with; probably the police will be here very soon, after us. Pakline has gone to the Sipiagins."

"What for?" muttered Neshdanof in a barely audible voice.

But his eyes became brighter, his face wore again its usual expression. His intoxication had entirely left him.

"To try to secure his protection."

Neshdanof straightened himself up.

"For us?"

"No, for Markelof. He wanted to speak in our behalf too, but I forbade him. Was I right, Alexis?"

"Right?" said Alexis, holding out both hands without rising from his chair. "Right?" he repeated, drawing her toward him, and pressing his face against her he burst into tears.

"Why, what is the matter?" cried Marianne.

As she had done that other time when he fell at her feet, overcome, speechless with a sudden gust of passion, she placed both hands on the quivering head of the young man. But her present feeling was very different from what she had then felt. Then, she resigned herself to him, she

submitted and awaited his decision ; now, she pitied him and thought only of calming him.

"What's the matter?" she repeated. "Why do you weep? Is it because you came home in such a state? No, it can't be that. Is it because you are sorry for Markelof, or that you are afraid for me and for yourself? Do you regret our shattered hopes? But you couldn't expect everything to go as if it had been oiled."

Neshdanof raised his head quickly.

"No, Marianne," he said, swallowing his sobs, "I'm not afraid for you, nor for myself—but, to tell the truth—I am sorry for—"

"For whom?"

"For you, Marianne ; you, who have united your fate with that of a man who was not worthy of you."

"How so?"

"Well, because, for instance, at a time like this, that man can be crying."

"It's not you who are crying ; it's your nerves."

"My nerves and I are one. Come, Marianne, look me in the eye ; can you honestly say that you don't regret?"

"What?"

"Having run off with me?"

"No."

"And you would do it again? Anywhere?"

"Yes!"

"Really, Marianne—you would?"

"Yes ; I gave you my hand, and so long as you are he whom I loved, I shall not withdraw it."

Neshdanof was still sitting on the chair ; Marianne was standing in front of him. He had both hands around her waist and she had placed hers upon his shoulders.

"Yes—no—" thought Neshdanof, "and yet before, when I held her in my arms, as I do now, her body at least was motionless ; whereas now I notice that she gently, involuntarily, perhaps, draws back from me."

He opened his arms, and in fact Marianne fell back a barely imperceptible degree.

"Listen," he said aloud ; "if we must take to flight before the police finds us, I think it would be well if we

were to be married first. Perhaps we shan't be able to find another priest as accommodating as Zossime.

"I'm ready," said Marianne.

Neshdanof looked at her attentively.

"Roman maiden!" he said with a bitter smile. "The sense of duty!"

Marianne shrugged her shoulders.

"We must speak to Solomine about it."

"Ah, yes—to Solomine—" said Neshdanof slowly. "But he too, I suppose, is in danger from the police. It seems to me that he plays a more important part than I, and that he knows a great deal more about it."

"I don't know," answered Marianne. "He never talks about himself."

"Unlike me," thought Neshdanof; "that's what she means. Solomine," he added after a long silence; "you see, Marianne, I should not have complained if the man to whom you had given yourself for life had been a Solomine, or if it had been Solomine himself."

Marianne in her turn looked at Neshdanof attentively.

"You have no right to say that," she said finally.

"No right? How am I to understand that? Do you mean that you love me, or that, in general, the question should not be discussed?"

"You had no right," repeated Marianne.

Neshdanof lowered his head.

"Marianne!" he said with a half-choking voice.

"What?"

"If now—if I were to ask you—you know? no, I shall not ask anything of you. Good-by!"

He rose and went into the other room. Marianne did not detain him. Neshdanof sat down on a sofa and buried his face in his hands. He was terrified by his own thoughts, and did his best to avoid thinking. He had a strange feeling, as if an obscure, mysterious hand had taken a deep hold on his being and was never going to let go. He knew that the dear girl in the next room, close by, would never leave it to look for him, and that he would never go to her. Besides, what would be the use? What could he have said to her?

Firm, quick steps made him open his eyes. Solomine was crossing the room. He knocked at the door of Mari-
anne's room and went in.

"Salute and retire," murmured Neshdanof bitterly.

He had involuntarily recalled the words one sentinel uses in relieving another.

XXXIV.

IT was ten o'clock in the evening, and in the drawing-room of Arjanoie, Sipiagin, his wife, and Kallomeïtsef were playing cards, when a footman entered to announce the visit of a stranger, a Mr. Pakline, who was very anxious to see Mr. Sipiagin on very urgent business of the greatest importance.

"As late as this?" said Mme. Sipiagin with astonishment.

"What," said Sipiagin, curving his classic nostrils, "what did you say was the gentleman's name?"

"He said Pakline."

"Pakline!" exclaimed Kallomeïtsef. "Pakline, Solomine! *De vrais noms ruraux, hein?*" he added in French.*

"And you say," continued Sipiagin, turning to the footman his nose, which he still held in the air, "that it is on important business?"

"So the gentleman said."

"Hum! it's probably some beggar, or some swindler" ("or both at once," Kallomeïtsef slipped in). "Very probably. Show him into my study." He arose. "Excuse me, my dear—while you're waiting you might play a game of *écarte*, or you can wait for me. I'll be back at once."

"We will talk, go ahead!" said Kallomeïtsef.

When Sipiagin entered his study and saw Pakline's pitiful little figure leaning against the wall between the door and the window, he was seized with just that official feeling of haughty pity and somewhat wearied condescension, which distinguishes the great dignitaries of St. Petersburg.

"Heavens! he looks like a plucked bird," thought he, "and I believe he limps, into the bargain."

* *Paklin* means tow, and *Soloma*, straw, in Russian.—Tr.

"Sit down!" he said, quite loud, in his most affable baritone, tossing back his little head benevolently, and taking a chair in front of his guest. "You must be tired from your drive; sit down and tell me what important business has brought you at this time of night."

"Your Excellency," began Pakline, sitting down very gently in an arm-chair, "I have taken the liberty of intruding upon you—"

"Wait a moment," interrupted Sipiagin. "I have seen you before. I never forget a face I have ever seen; I have an excellent memory. But—but where have I met you?"

"You are quite right, your Excellency. I had the honor of meeting you at St. Petersburg, at the room of a man who, since then, has been unfortunate enough to incur your wrath."

Sipiagin hastily arose from his chair.

"At Mr. Neshdanof's. I remember now. It is not from him, I hope, that you have come?"

"Not at all, your Excellency; quite the contrary."

Sipiagin sat down again.

"That's very fortunate, for in that case, I should have begged of you to leave immediately. No go-between can be permitted to interfere in this matter. Mr. Neshdanof has inflicted upon me one of those insults which can never be forgotten. I scorn revenge; but I wish to know nothing about him or that young woman whose mind is in fact more depraved than her heart" (this was at least the thirtieth time Sipiagin had used this expression since Marianne's flight). "Who did not shrink from leaving this roof when she had found shelter to become the mistress of a low-born vagabond. Let it be enough for them that I forget them!"

With the last few words he waved his hand as if he were pushing something away.

"That I forget them, sir!" he repeated.

"Your Excellency, I have had the honor of assuring you that I did not come for them, although it is true I might inform your Excellency that they have been united in the bonds of lawful matrimony." ("Bah!" he thought,

"I said I should talk nonsense, and now I have. Happen what will.")

Sipiagin rolled his neck from one side to the other on the back of his chair.

"That doesn't concern me the least in the world, my dear sir. Another foolish marriage, and that is all ! But what has all this to do with the urgent business to which I owe the pleasure of your visit ?"

"Wait a moment, you cursed provincial official," thought Pakline again. "I'll teach you to put on airs, with your ugly English mug !"

"Your wife's brother, Mr. Markelof," he said aloud, "has been arrested by the peasants, whom he was inciting to revolt, and is now locked up in the governor's house."

Sipiagin gave a start.

"What—what do you say ?" he stammered, no longer in his official baritone, but, as it were, catching his breath.

"I say that your brother-in-law has been arrested, and that he is now in jail. As soon as I heard this I took horses and started off to bring you the news. I thought I might be of some service to you and to the unlucky man whom you may save."

"I am very much obliged to you," said Sipiagin, with the same uncertain voice ; he struck with the palm of his hand a mushroom-shaped clock-bell which filled the house with its metallic ring. "I am very much obliged," he repeated in a more assured voice ; "but understand that a man who dares to trample all laws both human and divine beneath his feet, were he a hundred times my relative, is not in my eyes an unlucky man, he is a criminal."

A footman came running into the study.

"What is it you want, sir ?"

"A carriage, at once, and four horses. I'm going to the town. Philip and Stephen will go with me."

The footman vanished.

"Yes, sir," continued Sipiagin, "my brother-in-law is a criminal ; I go to the town, but not to save him ; oh, no !"

"But, your Excellency—"

"These are my principles, my dear sir, and I beg of you not to trouble and annoy me with your objections."

Sipiagin began to walk up and down his study. Pakline looked at him with staring eyes. "The devil!" he was thinking to himself, "they said you were a liberal, and you are going about like a 'roaring lion.'"

The door opened wide, and they saw first Valentine enter hastily, and then Kallomeïtsef.

"What does this mean, Boris? You have ordered a carriage? You are going to town? What has happened?"

Sipiagin went up to his wife, and took hold of her right arm between the elbow and the wrist.

"You must not be alarmed, my dear," he said in French. "Your brother has been arrested."

"My brother! Serge! What for?"

"He has been preaching socialism to the peasants." (Kallomeïtsef uttered a plaintive groan.) "Yes, he has been preaching revolution to them. He has been trying to get converts. The peasants arrested him and gave him up to justice. Now he is locked up in the town."

"Oh, the unlucky fool! But who told you?"

"This gentleman here. Mr. —? What is his name? Mr. Konopatine has just informed us."*

Valentine looked at Pakline who bowed meekly. "What a superb woman!" he thought. It will be noticed that even at the most critical moments Pakline remained susceptible to the charms of female beauty.

"And you want to go to town when it's so late?"

"I shall find the governor up."

"I always said that would be the end of it," exclaimed Kallomeïtsef. "It couldn't be otherwise. But what capital fellows those Russian peasants are! It's wonderful. *Pardon, madame*," he added in French, "*c'est votre frère*. But truth before everything."

"But seriously, Boris, do you want to go?" asked Valentine again.

"I'd be willing to bet," continued Kallomeïtsef, "that, that other man, the little tutor, Mr. Neshdanof, is implicated too. I'd stake my life on it. They are all tarred with the same stick. Hasn't he been arrested? Don't you know?"

* Konopatine in Russian means to cram with tow.—*Tr.*

Sipiagin again made the gesture of pushing something away with his hand.

"I don't know anything about him, and I don't care to. By the way," he added, turning to his wife, "it seems that they are married."

"Who told you? He?"

She looked at Pakline again; this time, half closing her eyes.

"Yes, he."

"In that case," cried Kallomeitself, "he must know where they are. Do you know where they are? Do you know? eh? eh? Do you know?"

While talking thus, he danced first on one side of Pakline and then on the other, as if to prevent his passing by, although there was no sign of his trying to escape.

"But tell me! answer me! eh? Do you know? Do you know?"

Pakline finally felt his blood rising; his little eyes flashed, he answered angrily:

"Even if I did know, sir, I should not tell you."

"Oh, ho!" said Kallomeitself, "you hear—you hear? But this fellow must be one of them, too."

"The carriage is ready," said a footman opening the door.

Sipiagin seized his hat with an energetic but elegant gesture; but Valentine besought him so urgently to wait until the next morning, she brought forward such good reasons: that night had fallen, that everybody in town would be in bed, that it would only ruin his nerves, that he might catch cold, that, finally, Sipiagin let himself be persuaded, and exclaimed:

"I submit."

And with a gesture no less elegant, but not at all energetic, he put his hat down on the table.

"You can send the carriage back," he ordered the footman, "but let it be ready to-morrow morning at six punctually. You understand? Well, go!—wait a moment! Dismiss Mr. — this gentleman's, carriage! Pay the coachman! What? Did you say anything, Mr. Konopatine? I'll take you with me to-morrow morning, Mr. Konopatine!

What do you say ? I can't hear. You'll take some brandy, won't you ? Give Mr. Konopatine some brandy ! No ! you won't take any ? That's another thing. Feodor ! Show this gentleman to the green chamber. Good night, Mr. Kono—"

Pakline could restrain himself no longer.

"Pakline !" here he roared in a voice of thunder. "My name is Pakline !"

"Oh, yes, yes ; it's the same thing ; it makes no difference, you know. But what a voice you have, and you look so weak ! Well, I'll see you to-morrow, Mr. Pakline. Am I right this time ? Simeon, you will come with us ?" he added in French to Kallomeitsef.

"Of course, I'm coming."

They led Pakline to the green room, and they even locked him in. While he was undressing he heard the key turn in the English lock. He cursed his plan, which was such an inspiration of genius, and enjoyed very uneasy slumbers.

The next morning, at half-past five he was aroused. They brought him his coffee, and, while he was drinking it, the footman, who was decorated with many-colored shoulder knots, stood watching him, with his waiter in his hands, resting first on one foot and then on another, as if he were saying, "Come, hurry, hurry, the gentlemen are waiting for you !" Then they showed him down. The carriage was already at the door, as well as Kallomeitsef's wagon.

Sipiagin came out on the steps, wrapped in a woollen cloak with a rounded collar. For a long time these cloaks had not been worn by any one except a certain very high personage, to whom Sipiagin paid court, and whom he tried to imitate. On official and important occasions he never forgot this cloak.

He saluted Pakline civilly, and pointing quickly to the cushion of the carriage asked him to sit there.

"Mr. Pakline, you are coming with me, Mr. Pakline. Put Mr. Pakline's carpet-bag on the seat ! I'm going to take Mr. Pakline !" he said, throwing the accent on the *a* of his name. "So," he seemed to be trying to convey ! "you are cursed with a name like that, and you are angry because people change it ! Well, you can get your fill of

it now! Stuff yourself with it! Mr. Pakline, Mr. Pakline!" This unfortunate name resounded perpetually in the cool morning air.

The air was so cool that Kallomeïtsef, who came out just behind Sipiagin, said a great many times, "Brr, brr, brr!" like a Frenchman, and wrapped himself more warmly in his cloak as he got into his elegant open wagon. (When his poor friend, Prince Michael Obrenovitch of Servia saw this wagon, he bought one just like it of Binder. "You know Binder, the great carriage-maker on the Champs-Élysées.")

Meanwhile, Valentine, "in cap and gown of night,"* was looking at them through the half-open shutters.

Sipiagin got into the carriage and waved his hand to her.

"Are you quite comfortable, Mr. Pakline? Go ahead!"

"I intrust my brother to you; be gentle with him," said Valentine.

"Don't be uneasy," answered Kallomeïtsef, casting toward her a calm glance from beneath the edge of his traveling-cap, on the top of which was a cockade—this was his semi-official cap, which he had himself devised. "It's the other we shall have to catch! Go on," he ordered again; "you are not cold, Mr. Pakline? Go on!"

The carriages started.

During the first part of the way, both Sipiagin and Pakline kept silence. Poor Sila, with his shabby overcoat and his worn-out cap, looked even more pitiful than ever against the dark blue ground of rich silk with which the carriage was lined.

He looked quietly at the delicate blue curtains which rolled up so quickly when a spring was touched, and at the white, curly, sheep's wool foot-warmer into which he stuck his feet; and at the little red wooden box, fastened on the front of the carriage, whence fell a little tablet for writing, and even a rest for a book. (Sipiagin used to like, or rather he wanted to make people think he liked to work in his carriage, as M. Thiers does on journeys.)

Pakline felt ill at ease. Sipiagin glanced at him twice

* A line from Poushkine.

out of the corner of his eye over the edge of his smoothly-shaven cheek, and then with impressive slowness he drew from his side pocket a silver cigar-case, richly decorated with a monogram in Slavonic characters, and offered him, yes, he positively offered him a cigar, which he held between the second and third fingers of his hand, which was protected by yellow English dog-skin gloves.

"I—I don't smoke," stammered Pakline.

"Ah!" said Sipiagin, and he lit himself the cigar, a delicious regalia.

"I must tell you, dear Mr. Pakline," he said politely, blowing out with little puffs delicate waving lines of fragrant smoke, "that I am really very much obliged to you. Last evening I may have seemed a little harsh to you—that is not—not my usual way" (Sipiagin cut up his sentences in this way designedly), "I can assure you. But, Mr. Pakline, just put yourself in my—my position." (Sipiagin here rolled his cigar to the other corner of his mouth.) "My position makes me—what shall I say? prominent; and suddenly—my wife's brother—compromises himself, and compromises me—me too in the most incredible way. What do you say to that, Mr. Pakline? You think, perhaps, that no very serious matter?"

"I don't think so at all, your Excellency."

"You don't know exactly why nor when he was arrested?"

"I have heard that it was in the district of T——."

"Who told you?"

"A—a man."

"Of course it wasn't a bird. But who was the man?"

"The assistant of the manager of the governor's court."

"What is his name?"

"Of the manager?"

"No, the assistant."

"His name is Ouliachévitch. He's a very conscientious official, your Excellency. As soon as I heard of this affair I hastened to bring word to you."

"Yes, exactly, and I tell you again that I'm very much obliged to you. But what nonsense it all is, Mr. Pakline, isn't it?"

"The most utter nonsense!" exclaimed Pakline, who felt a cold sweat rolling like a small damp snake down his back. "It's a totally mistaken idea of the Russian peasant. Mr. Markelof, so far as I know him, has a good and really noble heart, but he has never understood the Russian peasant." Pakline gave a quick glance at Sipiagin, who was half turned toward him, and was looking at him with a cold but not hostile expression. "Those who want to incite our peasants to revolution can only do it by making use of their devotion to the imperial power and family. They would have to devise some story like that of the false Demetrius who should show on his breast the imperial mark which he branded them with, a red-hot kopeck."

"Yes, yes, like Pougatchef," interrupted Sipiagin, with an air which said, "Don't be too learned; other people know their history, too." And repeating again, "It's nonsense, perfect nonsense!" he seemed to busy himself once more in contemplation of the line of smoke which rose rapidly from the end of his cigar.

"Your Excellency," said Pakline, with a little more confidence, "I told you just now that I did not smoke, but that was not true. I do smoke, and your cigar is so fragrant—"

"Eh! what! What did you say?" said Sipiagin, as if he had been waked up from a deep sleep, and without giving Pakline time to repeat what he had said (a proof that he had understood him perfectly and only pretended not to have heard him), he offered him his open cigar-case.

Pakline modestly lit a cigar, with a grateful air. "I take it, this would be a favorable moment," he thought.

But Sipiagin anticipated him.

"You said something, I believe," he began, with an air of indifference, and with frequent pauses to look at his cigar, to puff out his cheeks, and to push his cap over his face from the back of his head, "you said something, didn't you—you spoke about your other friend, the one who married my—relative. You've seen them? They are living near here?"

"Ha, ha!" thought Pakline. "Sila, my boy, take care!"

"I have only seen them once, your Excellency. They are living in fact not very far from here."

"Of course you understand," resumed Sipiagin in the same way, "that, as I said, I can't take any serious interest in that thoughtless girl nor in your friend. Heavens! I'm not prejudiced, but you must see it's a ridiculous business; it's too stupid. Besides, I can't help thinking that what brought them together was politics—politics!" he repeated, shrugging his shoulders, "rather than any other feeling."

"I think so too, your Excellency."

"Yes, Mr. Neshdanof was a real radical. I ought to do him the justice of saying that he never concealed his opinions."

"Neshdanof," Pakline ventured to say, "has possibly let himself be led away; but his heart—"

"He has a good heart," interrupted Sipiagin; "of course, of course: just like Markelof. All these gentlemen have very good hearts. Probably he too had something to do with this matter, and will be caught. Something ought to be done for him."

Pakline pressed his two hands upon his breast.

"Ah! yes, yes, your Excellency! Grant him your protection! He deserves it—I assure you—he deserves your sympathy."

"Ahem!" sighed Sipiagin; "do you think so?"

"And if not for himself, do it for your niece, his wife. (Good God! what fibs I'm telling!" said Pakline to himself once more.)

Sipiagin half closed his eyes.

"You are a most devoted friend, I see clearly. That is very proper, and very praiseworthy of you. So you say that they live very near here?"

"Yes, your Excellency; in a large establishment—"

Pakline bit his tongue.

"So; at Solomine's! exactly! Besides, I knew that; people had been talking about it; yes, they had said so—yes!" Sipiagin had no previous notion of it, and no one had breathed a word about it; but recalling Solomine's visit and their nocturnal interviews, he threw out this bait, and Pakline swallowed it.

"Since you know—" he began, then he stopped and bit his tongue again, but it was too late ; a glance which Sipiagin cast at him showed him that throughout the whole conversation, Sipiagin had been playing with him as a cat plays with a mouse.

"Besides, your Excellency," the poor wretch stammered, "I must tell you that in fact I know nothing at all—"

"But I haven't asked you anything. Come ! what does this mean ? For whom do you take us ?" haughtily exclaimed Sipiagin, putting on again his official superciliousness.

And Pakline felt again very humble and wretched, as if he had been caught and muzzled. Until that moment he had been smoking with the cigar in the further corner of his mouth, and he had been gently puffing the smoke out as if by stealth, but then he took the cigar from his lips and stopped smoking entirely.

"Good God !" he moaned, while bathed in a cold sweat. "What have I done ? I have betrayed everything and everybody ! They have humbugged me, and bought me with a good cigar ! I'm an informer ! and how, good Lord, can I mend the mischief now ?"

It was too late now, however, to repair the evil. Sipiagin had fallen asleep in a dignified and serious way, like a real minister, wrapped up in his robes of office. Besides, a quarter of an hour later, the two carriages stopped before the governor's house.

XXXV.

THE governor of S—— was one of those good-natured, careless, and worldly generals, with white, neat, clean skin, and a soul almost as clean as their body ; they are generally well-born, well brought up, and with qualities well kneaded together like good wheat bread ; without any intention of becoming leaders of men, they find themselves very tolerable officials ; they do not work very hard, they sigh continually for St. Petersburg, and pay court to the pretty women of the provinces ; they are of undeniable service to their government, and leave very kindly memories behind them.

He had just got out of bed ; and, arrayed in a silk dressing-gown, with his night-shirt unbuttoned, he was sitting before his shaving-glass, washing his face and neck with water perfumed with cologne, having first removed a whole collection of images and scapularies, when word was brought him that Sipiagin and Kallomeïtsef had come to see him on very urgent business.

He knew Sipiagin very well ; they had been on most intimate terms since their tenderest infancy ; they had frequently met in St. Petersburg drawing-rooms, and for some time, whenever Sipiagin's name occurred to him, he invariably added a respectful "Ah !" as he would to a future high official.

He knew Kallomeïtsef less well, and thought much less highly of him ; for some time he had been hearing disagreeable complaints about him ; but he thought of him as one who would rise in the world, in one way or another.

He sent word to his visitors to step into his office, and he soon joined them, still in his dressing-gown. He did not even apologize for receiving them in so informal a dress, and shook hands with them politely.

Pakline had not followed the two others into the governor's office ; he was waiting in the parlor. As he got out of the carriage he tried to get away under pretense of business at home ; but Sipiagin had detained him with polite firmness, while Kallomeïtsef came running up all out of breath, and whispered in the ear of his friend Boris, "Don't let him go ! Thunder and Mars !" and had made him go up with them. Still, Sipiagin had not taken him into the office, but with the same polite firmness, he had asked him to sit down in the parlor and wait till he should be called.

Pakline, when he was left alone, thought again of running away, but a sturdy gendarme, who had been sent by Kallomeïtsef, appeared at the door. Pakline stayed.

"I suppose you can guess what has brought me, Vladimir ?" said Sipiagin to the governor.

"No, my dear friend, I cannot," answered the kindly epicurean, while a polite smile rounded his rosy cheeks, showing his glistening teeth, half concealed by silky mustaches.

"What ? But has Markelof—"

"What Markelof ?" repeated the governor with the same expression.

He had an indistinct recollection that the person who had been arrested the evening before was named Markelof, and he had completely forgotten that Mme. Sipiagin had a brother of that name.

"But won't you sit down, Boris ?" he went on ; "take a chair ; won't you take a cup of tea ?"

Sipiagin had something very different in his head. Finally, when he had told his story and explained why Kallomeïtsef and he had come to see him, the governor uttered an expression of grief ; he struck his forehead with his hand, and his face looked sincerely pained.

"Yes, yes !" he repeated. "What a terrible thing ! He's still here, provisionally ; you know we keep them only one night ; only the chief of police is not in town to-day, that's why your brother-in-law is still here. But he'll be sent off to-morrow. Heavens, what a painful piece of

business ! How your wife must suffer ! What can I do for you ? ”

“ I should like to have an interview with him here, if the law permits. ”

“ What, my friend ! Laws were not made for people like you. I'm sure I sympathize with your distress. It's dreadful, you know. ”

He gave a certain signal with his bell. An aide-de-camp appeared.

“ Dear baron, if you please, will you have the kindness— ” he whispered what he wanted him to do. The baron disappeared. “ Only think, my dear friend, the peasants nearly killed him. They tied his hands behind his back, and off they went with him. And as for him, he doesn't seem angry, or as if he took it ill, upon my word ! He's perfectly calm—I was exceedingly surprised. But then you'll see him. He's one of the quiet fanatics. ”

“ Those are the worst kind, ” said Kallomeïtsef sententially.

The governor looked at him rather severely.

“ By the way, I've something to say to you, Simeon Petrovitch. ”

“ What is it ? ”

“ It's a sad thing. ”

“ But what is it ? ”

“ You remember the peasant who owed you money and who came here to make a complaint ? ”

“ Well ? ”

“ He's hung himself. ”

“ When ? ”

“ It makes no difference when ; but it's a sad piece of business. ”

Kallomeïtsef shrugged his shoulders, and walked off toward the window, with an indifferent air.

The aide-de-camp returned, accompanied by Markelof.

The governor had spoken truly ; Markelof was wonderfully calm. The gloom which usually sat upon his face had been succeeded by an expression of weary indifference. There was no change when he saw his brother-in-law, but when he cast a quick glance at the German aide-de-camp

who had brought him in, there could be seen in his eyes a last spark of the old hate with which that class of men inspired him.

His coat was torn in two places, and roughly darned with coarse thread ; on his forehead, eyebrows, and nose, were scars and traces of coagulated blood. He had not washed his face, but he had combed his hair. He stood still near the door with his hands buried in his sleeves. His breathing was regular.

"Serge !" said Sipiagin in a broken voice, taking two steps toward him, and holding out his hand just so as to touch him or to stop him if he should come forward : "Serge, I haven't come here to tell you about our surprise and great grief, for you cannot doubt of them. You wanted to ruin yourself and you have succeeded. But I wanted to see you, to make you—ahem !—to give you an opportunity to listen to the voice of reason, of honor, of friendship ! You can still alleviate your lot, and I will do my share. See, here is the honorable head of our government, who will confirm all I have said."

Here Sipiagin raised his voice.

"Sincere repentance for the past, full and free confession, which will be forwarded to those who—"

"Your Excellency," said Markelof suddenly, turning toward the governor—his voice was calm but a little husky—"I thought you wanted to see me to resume the examination. But if you have only had me brought here at Mr. Sipiagin's request, I beg that you will send me back again. We can come to no agreement. Everything he says is Greek to me."

"Excuse me—Greek !" interrupted Kallomeïtsef in a harsh, high voice. "Is it Greek to stir up the peasants ? Is it Greek, eh ? Is it Greek ?"

"Your Excellency, is that man one of the secret police ? He's so zealous !" said Markelof, while a faint smile of pleasure lit up his pallid lips.

Kallomeïtsef ground his teeth and stamped his foot. The governor stopped him.

"It's your own fault. Why do you meddle in what doesn't concern you ?"

"That doesn't concern me ! That doesn't concern me ! It seems to me it concerns all of us gentlemen !"

Markelof threw a slow, scornful glance at Kallomeïtsef, as if it was the last look he should ever give him, then he turned a little toward Sipiagin.

"As for you, my dear brother-in-law, if you want me to explain my ideas to you, here they are : I acknowledge that the peasants are quite justified in arresting me and handing me over to the authorities, since my words displeased them. They were perfectly free to do as they did. I went to them, they did not come to me. And if I am sent to Siberia I shall not complain, although I think myself innocent. The government is doing its duty, it is defending itself ! Doesn't that satisfy you ?"

Sipiagin raised his hands high.

"Doesn't that satisfy me ? what an expression. That is not the question, and it is not for us to judge what the government may think it proper to do ; but I want to know if you understand, my dear Serge " (here he touched emotional chords) "the inconsistency, the folly of this attempt ; if you are ready to give some sign of repentance, and if, up to a certain point, I can answer for you, Serge ?"

Markelof knit his thick brows.

"I have spoken, and I don't care to go over it again."

"But your repentance—how about that ?"

Markelof burst out violently.

"Don't bother about repentance ! You want to find out my heart's secret ? That's my own affair. Leave me alone, please."

Sipiagin shrugged his shoulders.

"You are always the same ; you will not listen to the voice of reason ! You might get out of this scrape honorably, without any scandal."

"Honorably, without any scandal !" repeated Markelof grimly. "We know what that means. Such expressions are always used when any villainy is proposed. That's their real meaning."

"We pity you," said Sipiagin, continuing to argue with Markelof, "and you hate us—"

"Tender pity ! You send us to Siberia, to prison, that's

the way you show your pity ! Oh, leave me alone, in Heaven's name ! ”

And Markelof bowed his head.

In spite of his external calm he was exceedingly agitated. What was torturing and chafing him more than anything else was that he had been betrayed—by whom ? By Eremei of Galapliok ! By that Eremei, in whom he had so blindly trusted ?

That Mendelei Dontik had not followed him, did not surprise him—Mendelei was a drunkard, and consequently a coward. But Eremei, Eremei, who had been for Markelof the very personification of the Russian people ! It was he who had betrayed him.

So all of Markelof's efforts had been without rhyme or reason ! So Kisliakof had only talked nonsense ! So Vassili Nicholaïvitch had given absurd orders, and all the articles, and pamphlets, and socialist and free-thinking books, every line of which seemed something plain and absolute—were all a snare and a delusion ! Was it possible ? and that comparison about the ripe abscess, was that mere verbiage ?

“ No, no,” he murmured to himself, while a light flush crept over his bronzed cheeks ; “ no, it's all true—and it is my fault ; I haven't said or done what was right ; I ought to have simply given my orders, and if any one resisted, have lodged a ball in his head, without any further remark. Whoever is not with us is unworthy to live—one does a good service in shooting down spies like dogs and worse things yet.”

And Markelof went over in his mind the events of his work : At first the silence of the peasants, then their winking at one another, the shouts of those on the outside. Then a peasant, who came up one side as if he were going to make a bow to him. Then a sudden scuffle, and he, Markelof, was knocked down. “ My friends, my friends, what are you doing ? ” And they. “ Quick, a rope ! Tie him ! ” Then his bones cracking, and impotent rage, vile dust in his mouth and nostrils. “ Turn him over, put him in the telega ! ” A great roar of laughter—oh, the hideous thing !

"I didn't manage right, I didn't manage right."

That is what was tormenting and racking him. That he had been thrashed was simply a personal misfortune, which had no connection with the common undertaking—that could be endured—but Eremeï, Eremeï!

While Markelof was standing thus with his head sunk on his breast, Sipiagin drew the governor to one side, and whispered to him with little quiet gestures, tapping his forehead with two fingers, as if to say, "You know, the poor fellow isn't quite right there," trying to arouse if not sympathy, at least pity for the unfortunate creature.

And the governor shrugged his shoulders, opening and closing his eyes alternately; he regretted his powerlessness, and finally promised something.

"Every consideration, certainly every consideration," he lisped politely through his perfumed mustaches.

While they were talking in the corner, Kallomeïtsef had great difficulty in keeping quiet; he moved restlessly, he smacked his tongue, coughed, and in a word he showed every sign of impatience. Finally he could stand it no longer, and going up to Sipiagin, he whispered quickly in his ear:

"You've forgotten the other!"

"Oh, yes!" answered Sipiagin aloud; "thank you for reminding me. I must bring the following circumstances to the knowledge of your Excellency," he said addressing the governor.

He used this formal language with his friend Vladimir, in order not to impair the majesty of authority in the presence of an insurgent. "Certain facts have led me to the supposition that my brother-in-law's foolish attempts must have ramifications, and that one of these branches—in other words, one of the individuals whom I suspect—is very near this town. Have that man brought in," he added in a low voice. "There's some one in your parlor, I brought him here."

The governor gazed at Sipiagin, and thought admiringly, "What a man he is!" and gave the order. A moment later, and the servant of God,* Sila Pakline, appeared before them.

* The official phrase used in such cases.—*Tr.*

Sila Pakline bowed very low before the governor ; but when he saw Markelof, he did not finish his bow, and stood with his head bending forward, turning his cap in his hands.

Markelof gave a hasty look, and he probably did not recognize him, for he buried himself again in his thoughts.

"Is that the branch?" asked the governor, pointing to Pakline with his long, white finger on which was a turquoise ring.

"Oh, no!" answered Sipiagin, laughing a little. "Yet," he added, after a momentary reflection, "your Excellency," he went on aloud, "you see before you a certain Mr. Pakline. To the best of my knowledge he lives in St. Petersburg, and he is the intimate friend of a certain person who filled the position of tutor in my house, whence he ran away, taking with him—I am burning with mortification when I say it—a young girl, a relation of mine."

"Oh, yes, yes," mumbled the governor, nodding his head. "I heard something about it at the countess's."

Sipiagin raised his voice.

"The person I just mentioned is a certain Mr. Neshdanof, who is strongly suspected by me of dangerous ideas and theories."

"He's a most fiery radical!" added Kallomeïtsef.

"Dangerous ideas and theories," repeated Sipiagin still more distinctly. "He is certainly mixed up with this whole crusade, and he is now hiding, Mr. Pakline tells me, in the merchant Faleïef's factory."

At the words, "Mr. Pakline tells me," Markelof looked again at Pakline, but he merely smiled slowly and unconcernedly.

"Excuse me, excuse me, your Excellency," cried Pakline, "and you too, Mr. Sipiagin, I never—never—"

"You said, at Faleïef's?" the governor asked of Sipiagin, gently waving his hand at Pakline as if to say, "Gently, my boy, gently; your turn will come in a moment!" "What has got into those long-bearded merchants? One was arrested yesterday for this very affair. You know his name, perhaps?—Goloushkine, a rich fel-

low. Oh, he'll never lead a revolution. All day he has been groveling on the ground on his knees."

"Faleïef is not implicated in this business," said Sipiagin. "I have no idea what his opinions are. I only wanted to speak about his factory, where Mr. Neshdanof is at present, according to Mr. Pakline—"

"I didn't say so," roared Pakline. "You said so yourself."

"Excuse me, Mr. Pakline," retorted Sipiagin with a pitilessly distinct intonation, "I respect the feeling of friendship which inspires your denial." ("Oh, Guizot, over again," thought the governor.) "But I will take the liberty of pointing out to you my own case. Do you think the feeling of relationship is not as strong in me as that of friendship in you? But there is another feeling, my dear sir, which is even stronger, and which ought to guide all our actions—the feeling of duty!"

"*Le sentiment du devoir*," said Kallomeïtsef, translating it into French.

Markelof looked at both of the orators.

"Your Excellency," he said, "I repeat my request: order me, please, to be taken out of the presence of these two wind-bags."

But at this the governor lost his patience.

"Mr. Markelof," he cried, "in view of your position I should advise you to be more careful what you say, and to show more respect for your superiors, especially when they express such patriotic sentiments as those which you have just heard from the lips of your brother-in-law. It will give me a great deal of pleasure, my dear Boris," the governor went on, "to give the minister an account of your noble conduct. But where exactly in the mill is this Mr. Neshdanof?"

Sipiagin frowned.

"He's with a certain Mr. Solomine, superintendent of the mill, according to Mr. Pakline."

Sipiagin seemed to feel a particular delight in tormenting poor Sila; it was the way he took his revenge for the cigar he had offered him in the carriage, and for the familiar, intimate, almost playful politeness which he had paid him.

"Do you know these gentlemen, Solomine, and what's his name? eh? Neshdanof?" asked the governor of Markelof, in an official, somewhat nasal tone.

"And you, your Excellency, do you know Confucius and Livy."

The governor turned his back on him.

"It's impossible to talk with that man," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Will you be good enough to come here a moment, baron?"

The aide-de-camp went up to him, and Pakline took advantage of that moment to hobble up toward Sipiagin.

"What are you doing?" he stammered; "why do you ruin your niece? You know very well she is with him—with Neshdanof."

"I am not ruining any one, my dear sir," answered Sipiagin distinctly; "I am obeying my conscience and—"

"Your wife, my sister, who has you under her thumb," said Markelof, finishing the sentence in the same tone.

Sipiagin did not frown; all that was so much below him.

"Listen," said Pakline, in the same broken voice; his whole body was quivering with emotion, and possibly fear; his eyes were glowing with wrath, his throat was swollen with tears—tears of pity for them, of anger with himself. "Listen to me: I told you she was married; that is not true, I deceived you; but they ought to be married, and if you prevent it, if the police capture them, you will have on your conscience a stain which nothing can ever wash off, and you—"

"The information you give," interrupted Sipiagin, raising his voice still higher, "provided it is true, which I have the right of doubting, can only hasten the steps I have thought it necessary to take; as for the purity of my conscience, I beg of you, my dear sir, not to make yourself uneasy about it."

"His conscience, my friend! it's varnished," broke in Markelof again; "they've covered it with Petersburg lacker; nothing can take hold of it. As for you, Mr. Pakline, you can lie as much as you please, you'll never lie out of this."

The governor thought it his duty to put a stop to all these remarks.

"I think, gentlemen, that you have made it perfectly clear; that is why, baron, I must ask you to show Mr. Markelof back again. There's nothing more needed, Boris?"

Sipiagin opened his arms.

"I have said all I could."

"Very well, dear baron."

The adjutant went up to Markelof, rattled his spurs against each other, and with his right hand described a short, horizontal line, which meant "If you please, march." Markelof turned and left the room. Pakline, in imagination, pressed his hand with a feeling of sad sympathy and pity.

"And now we are going to set our men on the mill," resumed the governor. "Only listen: Boris, it seems to me that this gentleman," pointing to Pakline with a turn of his chin, "told you something about your niece—that she was there at the factory; and in that case—"

"She must not be interrupted under any circumstances," answered Sipiagin thoughtfully; "she may think it over and decide to return. With your permission I will write her a line."

"Do. But you can rest easy. We'll lock the fellow up; we are polite to the ladies, and of course to her."

"But you haven't settled about this Solomine," cried in an aggrieved voice Kallomeïtsef, who had been listening, during this private talk, to pick up a few scraps. "I assure you he's the leader of the whole thing. In these matters I assure you I have a sure scent."

"*Pas trop de zèle*, my dear Simeon Petrovitch," answered the governor smiling. "Remember Talleyrand. If he had anything to do with it he won't get off. But you'd better think about your"—here the governor imitated the gasp of a choking man—"your debtor. By the way," he went on, turning to Sipiagin, "*et ce gaillard là*," pointing again at Pakline with his chin, "what shall we do with him? He doesn't look very dangerous."

"Let him go," said Sipiagin, very low; and he added in

German, "*Lass den Lumpen laufen*,"* fancying—no one knows why—that he was quoting from Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*.

"You can go, my dear sir," said the governor aloud. "We have no further need of you. To the pleasure of our next meeting!"

Pakline made a bow to them all collectively, and went out humiliated, crushed. Good God! good God! this contempt was the last stroke.

"What!" he thought, in utter despair; "coward and informer! But no, no! I'm an honest man, gentlemen, and I'm not so void of courage."

But whose is that familiar face there on the steps of the governor's house, looking at him so sadly and reproachfully? It's—it's Markelof's old servant. He came to town evidently to follow his master, and he doesn't leave the threshold of the prison. But why does he look at Pakline in that way? He didn't betray Markelof.

"Why did I interfere where I had no business?" said Pakline to himself, relapsing into his gloomy revery. "Why didn't I stay quietly behind my counter? And now everybody says—and perhaps they'll put it in print—'A certain Mr. Pakline told everything and betrayed all; he betrayed his friends to their enemies.'" He then recalled the look Markelof had given him and that terrible "You'll never lie out of it," and the sad, dejected eyes of the old man; and, like St. Peter in the gospel, "he wept bitterly," and turned slowly to the oasis, to Fomoushka, Fimoushka, and Snan-doulia.

* Let the fellow go.

XXXVI.

THAT morning when Marianne left her room, she found Neshdanof dressed and seated on the sofa. He was supporting his head with one hand, the other hand lay limp and motionless on his knees.

She drew near him.

“Good morning, Alexis—you did not undress yourself? You have not slept? How pale you are!”

Neshdanof's heavy eyelids were slowly raised.

“I did not undress myself, I have not slept.”

“Are you sick, or is it merely the consequence of yesterday?”

Neshdanof shook his head.

“I have not slept since the time when Solomine went into your chamber!”

“When was that?”

“Yesterday evening.”

“Alexis, you are jealous! What an idea! You have chosen your time well! He hardly stayed with me a quarter of an hour. We were speaking of his cousin the priest, and of the arrangements to make for our wedding.”

“I know that he only remained a quarter of an hour; I saw him come out—and I am not jealous, oh, no! But since that moment I have not been able to sleep.”

“Why, then?”

Neshdanof kept silent.

“I have been thinking—thinking—thinking—” said he at length.

“About what?”

“About you—him—and myself.”

“And what conclusion did you come to?”

“Must I tell you, Marianne?”

“Tell me, I beg of you.”

"I came to the conclusion that I am an incumbrance, to you, to him, and to myself."

"To me ! to him ! I can guess what you imply in saying that, although you assert that you are not jealous. But for yourself ?"

"Marianne, there are two men in me, one of whom interferes with the other's life. That is why I say that both would do better to come to an end."

"Come, come, Alexis, I beg you. What an idea to torment yourself thus, and me as well as yourself ! What we have to do now is to find out what measures we ought to take. You know very well that they will not let us alone."

Neshdanof gently grasped her arm.

"Sit down by me, Marianne, and let us talk a little, like friends, while we yet have time. Give me your hand. It seems to me that we had better come to an explanation, although they say that explanations only complicate matters. But you are intelligent and good ; you will understand it all, or will guess at what I do not make clear. Sit down."

Neshdanof's voice was very calm, and in his eyes, which never left Marianne, was to be read a singular expression of friendly tenderness, mingled with entreaty.

Marianne readily sat down by his side and took his hand.

"Thank you, dearest. Listen to me—I will not keep you long : I have already thought over in my mind last night what I have to say to you. Listen, do not think that I have been very much troubled by what happened yesterday : it is probable that I must have been ridiculous, and even somewhat disgusting ; but you, I need not say, you never thought anything ill or degrading of me—you know me—I have just said that what happened yesterday did not trouble me : that is not quite true—it is false. I have been much troubled by it—not because I was brought home drunk, but because I found in it the absolute, complete proof of my bankruptcy, of my powerlessness ! and I don't mean on account of my inability to drink like a Russian peasant—I mean because of my character itself, as a whole ! Marianne, I must confess it to you. I do not believe in the work which has united us, in the work, in

the name of which we fled together, and toward which, I owe it to you to tell you, I had already cooled when the light of your faith warmed and kindled mine anew. I no longer believe, I no longer believe ! ”

He covered his eyes with the hand that was free, and was silent a moment. Marianne was also silent, she bent her head, she felt that he was telling her nothing new.

“ I at first imagined,” resumed Neshdanof uncovering his eyes, but no longer looking at the young girl, “ that I believed in the work itself, and only doubted myself ; my strength, my experience, my ability, I thought, does not correspond with my conviction ; but now it is clear to me that the two things go hand in hand, and then what is the good of deceiving myself ? No, it is that I no longer believe in the work itself. And you, do you believe in it, Marianne ? ”

Marianne drew herself up to her full height and raised her head.

“ Yes, Alexis,” said she ; “ I believe in it. I believe in it with all the strength of my soul, and I will devote my whole life, to my last breath, to this work ! ”

Neshdanof turned toward her with a look that betrayed both emotion and envy.

“ Yes, yes ; that is just what I expected you to say ; you see very well now that we do not belong together, you yourself have broken the tie between us.”

Marianne remained silent.

“ There is Solomine, for instance,” resumed Neshdanof. “ Solomine does not believe.”

“ What ? ”

“ No, he does not believe either, but he does not need to : he goes tranquilly forward. A man who is following a road to go to a town does not ask himself if this town really exists. He walks along, and that is all. That is what Solomine does, and he requires nothing more. As for me I cannot go forward, I will not go back, and standing still in the same place kills me. Now can I ask any one to share my lot ? You know the proverb, Let each one carry his end of the burden, and all will go well ! But if one of the two lacks strength to lift his end, what can the other do ? ”

"Alexis," said Marianne hesitatingly, "it seems to me that you exaggerate. In short, we love each other."

Neshdanof sighed deeply.

"Marianne, I revere you and you pity me, and each of us is convinced of the other's good faith : that is the real truth. As for love, there is none between us."

"Come, come, Alexis, what are you saying? Have you forgotten that to-day the pursuit begins, and that we must fly together, and never part more?"

"Yes, and go and be married by the priest Zossime, as Solomine proposed. I know very well that this marriage is nothing, in your eyes, but a passport, a means of escaping the troubles with which we are threatened by the police. But, in fact, up to a certain point, it would oblige us to a common life, side by side ; or, if it did not oblige us to this, it would at least presuppose in us a desire to live together."

"What do you mean, Alexis? You will stay here then?"

Neshdanof was upon the point of saying yes, but he considered, and replied :

"No—no."

"Then you will not go where I do on leaving here?"

Neshdanof pressed strongly the hand which she had left in his.

"It would be a sin to leave you without a defender and protector, and I will not do that, however weak I may be. You shall have a protector, do not doubt it."

Marianne leaned toward Neshdanof, and looked him full in the face with anxiety and solicitude, trying to look through his eyes into his soul, to the very bottom of his soul.

"What is the matter with you, Alexis? You have something on your mind. Tell me what it is. You alarm me. Your words are so strange, so enigmatical. And what an expression you have ! I have never before seen you look like this !"

Neshdanof gently pushed her from him, and softly kissed her hand. This time she neither resisted nor smiled. She continued to look at him anxiously.

"Don't be troubled, I beg of you. There is nothing

strange in this. This is all that's wrong : Markelof, I understand has been beaten by the peasants. He has felt their fists ; they have bruised his body. Me they have not beaten, they have even drunk to my health with me. But they have bruised my soul even more than Markelof's body. I was out of place with my circumstances ; I tried to put myself right again, but only succeeded in getting myself more out of place. That is precisely what you read on my face."

"Alexis," she said slowly, "this would be very bad if you were not sincere with me."

He wrung his hands.

"Marianne, my whole being is laid bare before you, and whatever I do, I warn you of it beforehand, so that at the bottom of your heart you won't be really surprised at anything."

Marianne longed to ask him for an explanation of these words, but did not—the more that at this moment Solomine entered the room.

His movements were quicker and more nervous than usual. His eyes were cast down, his large lips were contracted, his whole face seemed to have grown thinner, and to have assumed a dry, hard, almost imperious expression.

"Friends," he said, "I come to warn you that there is no time to be lost. Get ready—it is time to start. You must be ready in an hour. You must go and be married. We have no news from Pakline ; they first kept his horses at Arjanoie, and then sent them back. He remained there. Probably they took him to town. He will not mean to inform about you, of course, but who knows ! His tongue may have run away with him. And then they would recognize my horses. My cousin has been told to expect you. Paul will accompany you. He will serve for your witness."

"And you—and 'thou?'"* Neshdanof asked him. "You are not going then ? I see you are in traveling rig," he added, pointing to the long cavalry boots which Solomine had on.

"No, no. These are on account of the mud."

* Neshdanof calls him "thou" from this time forth.—*Tr.*

"But if they make you suffer for us?"

"I don't think they will—at any rate that is my affair. In one hour then. Marianne, Tatiana wants to see you. She has got something ready for you."

"Oh! yes, in a moment. I was just going to her."

Marianne went toward the door.

Neshdanof's face bore a strange expression of mingled fright and anguish.

"Are you going, Marianne?" said he, with suddenly failing voice.

She stopped.

"I shall be back in half an hour. I must have a little time to get ready in."

"Yes; but come here."

"I will; but why?"

"I want to look at you once more." He looked at her for a long time. "Good-by, good-by, Marianne!" She seemed surprised. "You are wondering what is the matter with me—it is nothing—don't notice it. You are coming back in half an hour, ain't you? yes?"

"Certainly."

"Yes—yes—excuse me. My head is stupid from want of sleep. You know I was awake all night. I shall also be ready—soon."

Marianne left the room. Solomine was going to follow her, when Neshdanof stopped him.

"Solomine!"

"What?"

"Give me your hand. I must thank you for your hospitality."

Solomine barely smiled. "What an idea!"

He gave him his hand, however.

"And listen," continued Neshdanof; "if anything happens to me I may count on you, I may feel sure that you will look out for Marianne?"

"Your future wife?"

"Yes, Marianne."

"I am sure, in the first place, that nothing will happen to you; and besides, you may feel perfectly easy. Marianne is as dear to me as to you yourself."

“ Oh ! I know it, I know it, I know it. All right ! and thank you ! In an hour then ? ”

“ In an hour.”

“ I will be ready. Good-by.”

Solomine went out and overtook Marianne on the staircase. He meant to speak to her about Neshdanof, but he said nothing, and Marianne saw that he had something to say to her about Neshdanof, but did not say it. And she also said nothing.

XX XVII.

HARDLY had Solomine left the room when Neshdanof sprang up from the sofa ; he went twice round the room, then stopped short for a minute, as if lost in thought ; then he suddenly shook himself and took off his “masquerading” dress which he kicked into the corner ; he fetched and put on his former clothes.

Then he went up to the three-legged table and took from the drawer two sealed envelopes, and a small object which he thrust into his pocket ; the envelopes remained on the table.

He then leaned down, and opened the door of the stove. The stove contained a heap of ashes. This was all that was left of Neshdanof’s papers and private book of verses. He had burned them all during the night. But in this same stove, leaning against one of the walls, was the portrait of Marianne, Markelof’s gift. Evidently, Neshdanof had not had the courage to burn this portrait with the rest.

He took it out carefully, and put it on the table by the side of the sealed papers.

Then, with a vigorous movement, he seized his cap and started for the door. But he stopped, came back, and went into Marianne’s chamber.

After standing motionless for a moment, he cast a look about him, and approaching the young girl’s little bed, he placed his lips, with one suppressed sob, not on the pillow, but on the foot of the bed.

Then he stood up straight, drew his cap down over his forehead, and flung himself from the room. Without meeting any one either in the entry or on the staircase or down below, he slipped out into the little enclosure.

The day was cloudy, the sky lowering ; a little damp breeze bent the tops of the grass-blades and gently waved

the leaves on the trees. The mill made less noise than usual at this hour ; an odor of charcoal, of tar, and of soot came from the yard.

Neshdanof cast around him a scrutinizing, distrustful glance, then he walked up to the old apple-tree which had attracted his attention on the day of his arrival, when he first looked out of his chamber window.

The trunk of this apple-tree was covered with dry moss ; its bare and knotty branches, with but a few little green and brown leaves stuck on here and there, raised themselves crookedly toward the heavens, like the supplicant arms of an old man, with bent elbows.

Neshdanof stood firmly on the dark earth which surrounded the foot of the apple-tree, and drew from his pocket the small object which he had previously taken from the table drawer. Then he looked attentively at the windows of the little house.

“If some one were to see me at this moment,” he thought, “perhaps I should put off—”

But nowhere was a human face to be seen. Every thing seemed dead, every thing turned itself away from him ; drawing itself away from him forever, leaving him alone to the mercy of Fate. Only the factory was giving forth its rank odor, its dull uproar ; and a gentle rain began to fall in fine drops.

Then Neshdanof looked up, through the twisted branches of the tree beneath which he was standing, at the grey, heavy, wet, indifferent, blind sky ; he gaped, stretched his arms, said to himself “After all, there is nothing else to be done ; I cannot return to Petersburg, to prison.” He threw aside his cap, then feeling as beforehand, a sort of strange agonizing, but not wholly unpleasant, tension of the nerves. He put the mouth of the revolver against his breast, and pulled the trigger.

He felt a shock, not a very hard one, and he is stretched upon his back ; and he tries to understand what has happened to him, and how it is that he has just seen Tatiana. He even wishes to say, “ah ! there is no need !” But already he is stiff and mute. A whirlwind of green smoke rushes into his eyes, over his face, over his forehead, into

his brain, and a horrible weight crushes him forever to the ground.

Neshdanof was not mistaken in supposing he saw Tatiana ; just as he pulled the trigger, she came to one of the windows of the little house and desried him beneath the apple-tree.

She had scarcely time to ask herself : “ What is he doing under the apple-tree bareheaded, in such weather as this ? ” when she saw him fall over backwards, stiff and heavy as a sheaf of wheat.

Although she had not heard the rather weak report of the pistol, she felt at once that something tragic had happened, and rushed out to the enclosure, and ran up to Neshdanof.

“ Alexis Dimitrich what is the matter ? ”

But darkness had already filled his being. She bent over him and saw blood.

“ Paul ! ” she cried in an altered voice, “ Paul ! ”

A few moments later, Marianne, Solomine, Paul and two of the factory workmen were in the enclosure. Neshdanof was soon raised, carried into the chamber, and placed on the sofa where he had spent the previous night.

He was laid on his back, his half-closed eyes remained fixed, his face was lead colored ; he breathed slowly and laboriously, catching each breath like a child tired out with weeping. Life had not yet left his body.

Marianne and Solomine, standing on each side of the couch, were almost as pale as Neshdanof himself. They were both of them startled, stunned, crushed—especially Marianne—but they were not surprised.

“ Why did we not foresee this ? ” they thought, but at the same time it seemed to them—yes, it seemed to them as if they had foreseen it.

When he said to Marianne : “ Whatever I do, I warn you of it beforehand, you will not be surprised. ” And again—when he had spoken of the two men who existed in him, but who could not live together—was not a presentiment aroused in her ? Why did she not stop at that moment and reflect upon these words and this presentiment ? And why now did she dread looking at Solomine, as if he were her accomplice, and like her, suffered remorse ? Why

was the feeling of infinite pity, of desperate regret, with which Neshdanof inspired her, mingled a sort of terror, of shame? Might she, perhaps, have saved him? Why did they neither of them have courage to utter a word? They hardly dared breathe; they waited—what were they waiting for? Great God!

Solomine had sent for a surgeon, although there was evidently no hope. Titiana had put a large sponge filled with fresh water upon the wound, which was small, black, and had already stopped bleeding; she also moistened his forehead with cold water and vinegar.

Suddenly Neshdanof ceased choking and made a slight movement.

“He is coming to himself,” murmured Solomine.

Marianne knelt down by the side of the sofa. Neshdanof looked at her. Up to this moment his eyes had been fixed like those of a dying person.

“Ah! I am still alive,” said he with a hardly perceptible voice. “Unsuccessful now as ever! I detain you.”

“Alexis!” cried Marianne.

“But soon—you remember, Marianne, in my—poetry—Surround me with flowers.—Where are the flowers? But you are there, you—my letter—”

He shivered from head to foot.

“Oh! there it is.—Give—each other your hands—before me. Quick!—Give—”

Solomine seized the hand of Marianne, who had buried her head in the sofa, her face close beside the wound.

As for Solomine, he was standing, rigid, black as night.

“So.—That’s right.—So.”

Neshdanof began to gasp again, but this time in a different way. His chest rose and the lower part of his body contracted. He made evident efforts to place his hand on their clasped hands; but his were already dead.

“He is going,” murmured Tatiana, who was standing near the door.”

And she began to cross herself.

The sobbing breaths became rarer, shorter. He sought Marianne with his look, but a terrible milky whiteness already veiled his eyes.

"Right," said he. This was his last word.

He no longer existed, and the hands of Solomine and Marianne were still joined across his breast.

Here are the contents of the two letters which he left behind him. The first which was addressed to Siline, consisted of these few lines :

"Good-by ! my brother, my friend, good-by ! When you receive this bit of paper, I shall be no longer among the living. Do not ask how or why ; and do not pity me, be sure that it is better so. Take our immortal Poushkin, and read over again the description of the death of Lenski, in '*Eugene Oneguine*.' You remember it ; 'The windows are white-washed, the hostess is gone, etc.' Nothing more—I shall tell you nothing, because I should have too much to tell you ; I have not time for it. But I could not go without warning you. You might have thought me still alive, and it would have been a sin on my part toward our friendship.

"Good-by ! try to live. Your friend,
"A. N."

The other letter, which was somewhat longer, was addressed to Solomine and to Marianne together. Here are its contents :

"MY DEAR CHILDREN !

(After these words there was an interruption ; something was scratched out, or rather effaced, as if by tears.)

"It will perhaps seem strange to you that I call you thus ; I am little more than a child, and you, Solomine, I know are older than I ; but I am about to die, and, at the end of my life, I seem to myself an old man. I am very guilty toward both of you, particularly toward you, Marianne, for in what I am about to do, I shall cause you much sorrow (you will feel it, I am sure, Marianne), and much inconvenience. But what could I do ? I could find no other way out of it all.

"I could not learn to simplify myself, and there was nothing left for me, but to put myself out of the way entirely. Marianne, I should have been a burden both to you and to

myself ; you are generous, and you would perhaps have joyfully accepted this burden as a new sacrifice ; but I had no right to impose it upon you ; you have more and better things to do.

“ My dear children, let me join you together with a hand which comes, as it were, from beyond the grave.

“ You will be happy with one another. You, Marianne, will end by wholly loving Solomine ; and as for him, he has loved you ever since the day when he first saw you at Sipia-gin’s. This has never been a secret from me, although we ran away together a few days later.

“ Oh, that morning ! How lovely, and fresh, and young it was ! It seems to me now symbolic of your double life, of yours and his ; and it was a mere accident that I was there in his place on that morning.

“ But I must stop. I do not mean to ask for your pity, only to exculpate myself. To-morrow there will be some moments that will be hard to bear. But what can I do since there is no other way out ? Farewell, Marianne, my dear, honest child ! Farewell, Solomine ! I confide her to you. Live happy ; live for the good of others. And you, Marianne, must only think of me when you are happy ; think of me as of a man who was honest and good, too, but to whom it was more becoming to die than to live.

“ I do not know whether I was in love with you, my dear ; but I know that I have never felt a stronger feeling, and that death would seem to me yet more terrible, if I did not carry with me into my grave a feeling like that.

“ Marianne, if you ever meet with a person named Mashurina—Solomine knows her, and besides, you have seen her too, I think—tell her that I thought of her with gratitude, a short time before my death. She will know what I mean.

“ I must shorten my farewells, however. I have just been looking out of the window. A bright star shone steadfastly through the clouds that rushed past it. But no matter how swiftly they went, they could not hide its beams. This star made me think of you, Marianne.

“ At this moment, you are asleep in the neighboring chamber,—and you suspect nothing. I drew near your door and

listened, and it seemed to me that I heard your quiet breathing. Farewell ! farewell, my children, my friends !

“ Yours, A.”

“ Only think ! in this letter written at the very moment when I am about to die, I have not said a word of our great work ! That is doubtless because so near to death I cannot lie. Marianne, forgive me this postscript. The falsehood was in me and not in the work in which you believe.

“ Oh ! one word more. You will perhaps think Marianne that I feared imprisonment—for of course I should have been arrested—and that I have taken this mode of escaping it ? No ; the prison is not such a great affair ; but to be in prison for the sake of an undertaking in which one did not believe, would be too absurd. If I make away with myself, it is not from dread of a prison.

“ Farewell ! Marianne ! Farewell ! ”

Marianne and Solomine, read one after the other, then she put both letters and the portrait into her pocket, and remained motionless.

Then Solomine said to her.

“ All is ready, Marianne, let us go—we must fulfill his wishes.”

Marianne approached Neshdanof, placed her lips on his already cold forehead, and turning to Solomine said :

“ Let us go.”

He drew her arm through his, and they both left the room together.

Some hours later, when the police made their way into the factory, they found Neshdanof, indeed, but dead. Tatiana had carefully arranged his bed, she had put a white pillow beneath his head ; she had crossed his hands ; she had even placed some flowers by his side.

Paul who had received all the necessary instructions gave the police a most respectful, and at the same time a most ironical reception ; so that they did not know whether to thank him or to put him under arrest.

He related to them all the details of the suicide, he gave

them Gruyère cheese to eat and madeira to drink ; but when they asked him what had become of Solomine and the young girl who had been staying in the factory, he professed the most complete ignorance on the subject ; he contented himself with assuring them that Solomine never stayed away long, on account of the business ; that he would surely return that day or the next ; and that when he did return he would let them know at the town at once, without a moment's delay. They could be sure of it for he was a punctual man !

So that the gentlemen returned empty-handed, having left some one in charge of the body and promising to send a magistrate.

XXXVIII.

TWO days after these events, a man and a young woman, both of whom are well-known to us, drove into the courtyard of good Father Zossime's house, and on the morrow they were married.

A few days afterwards they went away again, and the good Zossime never repented what he had done.

When he left the mill, Solomine had intrusted to Paul a letter directed to the owner, in which he gave a complete and accurate statement of the affairs of the mill—which were in excellent condition—and he asked for three months' leave of absence. It had been written two days before Neshdanof's death, whence it may be concluded that at that time Solomine had thought it necessary to go off with him and Marianne and to keep out of the way for some time.

The inquest that was held after the suicide brought nothing more to light. The body was buried, Sipiagin made no further effort to find his niece.

Markelof came up for trial nine months later. His hearing before the court was the same as that before the governor; calm, not without a certain dignity, and somewhat sad. His customary stiffness had grown softer; not from weakness, but from another and nobler feeling. He made no effort toward excusing himself, he showed no sign of repentance, he neither accused nor named anyone else; his gaunt face and his languid eyes wore merely an expression of resignation and firmness; and his short, but frank and concise answers awoke even in the judges a feeling akin to pity.

The peasants who had arrested him and who were the government witnesses also felt this feeling, and they spoke of him as a 'simple' and kindly *barine*.

But his guilt was too plain; he could not escape punish-

ment ; besides he seemed to accept it as a very natural consequence.

As for his few accomplices, Mashurina hid ; Ostrodumof was killed by a citizen to whom he was preaching insurrection, by an "accidental" blow ; Galouchkine, thanks to his "sincere repentance," was sentenced to only a light punishment (he nearly went mad from distress and terror) ; Kisliakof was imprisoned for a month and then let out, but they did not even interfere with his roaming as before through all the governments of Russia ; Neshdanof put himself out of the way by suicide ; Solomine—from lack of incriminating evidence—was suspected, but nothing was done about him. Besides, he did not avoid trial and appearance at the appointed day. No allusion was made to Marianne ; Pakline had succeeded in getting out of the scrape, but no one troubled himself about the poor man.

Eighteen months had passed ; it was the winter of 1870, at St. Petersburg, in the same St. Petersburg in which Privy Counsellor and Chamberlain Sipiagin was preparing to play a prominent part, where his wife was patronizing the arts, giving musical parties and organizing diet kitchens, where Mr. Kallomeïtsef was regarded as one of the most valuable officials in his department, a short man arrayed in a shabby coat with a cat-skin collar, was limping along one of the streets of the Vassili-Ostrof.

It was Pakline. He had changed since those days ; a few silver lines were glistening in the hair which hung below his fur lined cap.

A tall and somewhat stout lady, closely wrapped in a cloak of dark cloth, was coming along the sidewalk toward him.

He glanced at her carelessly and passed by her ; then he suddenly stopped, thought for a moment, stretched out his arms, and then, turning suddenly, he caught up with her and stared at her.

"Mashurina ?" he said in a low voice.

The lady gave him a haughty look and passed on without a word.

“My dear Mashurina, I have recognized you,” continued Pakline, limping along by her side ; but don’t be alarmed, I beg of you. You can be sure that I shan’t betray you ! I am so glad to have met you ! I am Pakline, Sila Pakline, you remember ; Neshdanof’s friend. Come to where I live ; it’s a stone’s throw from here. Do come !”

“*Io sono contessa Rocca*, and—and—*e ancora !*” answered the lady with a serious voice, but with a very pronounced Russian accent.

“Countess what ? How have you got to be a countess ? Come with me, we will have a talk.”

“But where do you live ?” asked the Italian countess suddenly, “I’m in a hurry.”

“I live in this street ; there’s my house ; do you see a gray, three-storied house ? How kind of you not to try to conceal yourself any longer. Give me your arm ! Have you been here long ? And how are you a countess ? Have you married some Italian count ?”

Mashurina had not married any Italian count ; but when she was in foreign parts they had given her a passport which had belonged to a certain Countess Rocca di Santo Fiume who had died a short time before ; and, provided with this, she had calmly gone back to Russia, although she did not understand a word of Italian, and was of a very markedly Russian type.

Pakline led the way to his modest dwelling. His deformed sister, Snandoulia, with whom he kept house, came out to meet them from behind the partition which separated the small ante-chamber from the still smaller kitchen.

“Here, Snandoulia,” said he, “I commend this lady to your good graces, she is a great friend of mine ; let us have some tea right away.”

Mashurina, who would never have accepted Pakline’s invitation if he had not spoken of Neshdanof, took off her hat, smoothed with her hand her hair, which was cut short as of old, bowed, and seated herself without a word.

She was not at all changed ; her dress even was the same she had worn two years before. But an unshaken sadness dwelt continually in her eyes, and this sadness gave a touching expression to her naturally rough face.

Snandoulia hastened to get the samovar; Pakline seated himself in front of Mashurina, tapped her on the knee with a friendly gesture, bent his head and tried to speak; but was first obliged to clear his throat, for his voice failed him, and tears shone in his little eyes. Mashurina sat motionless, with her body upright, without leaning back in her chair, and looked askance with a morose expression.

"Oh!" said Pakline at last, "how many things have happened! I look at you and recall many things and many people, some living and some dead. My two little love-birds are dead also; but you did not know them, I think; and both, as I said they would, went the very same day. And Neshdanof—poor Neshdanof! You no doubt know—"

"Yes, I know," replied Mashurina, still looking askance.

"And Ostrodumof?—you know, too, what happened to him?"

Mashurina nodded her head. She wished he would continue speaking of Neshdanof, but she dared not ask him to. He understood it, however.

"I heard that in the letter which he wrote just before his death he spoke of you. Is that true?"

"It is true," she said at length.

"What an excellent fellow he was! But he was wholly out of place! He was no more a revolutionist than I! Do you know what he really was?—a romantic realist! You understand me."

Mashurina cast a quick glance at Pakline. She did not understand or try to understand him. She then thought it strange and uncalled for that he should dare to compare himself with Neshdanof; but she said to herself, "Bah! let him boast, what harm does it do!"

In reality he was not boasting at all, he intended rather to lower himself by the comparison.

"I had a visit from a certain Siline," continued Pakline; "Neshdanof had also written to him before he died. This Siline asked me if it would not be possible to find some papers which the dead man had left behind him. But all Alexis' effects had been put under seal, and his papers no longer existed; he had burned them all, and his poetry too. You

did not know, perhaps, that he wrote verses? I regret their loss. I am sure that among them there must have been some not bad ones. But they all disappeared with him, all fell into the common gulf—and forever. Nothing remains but what is left in the memory of a few friends, who too will disappear in their turn—”

Pakline interrupted himself for a moment.

“By the way, the Sipiagins,” he resumed, “you remember them—those condescending big-wigs, so dignified and so disagreeable—well, they are now on the very summit of power and renown !”

Mashurina did not remember the Sipiagins at all ; but Pakline so cordially detested them both, particularly the husband, that he could not deny himself the satisfaction of abusing them.

“It seems that their establishment is as high-toned as possible ! They are forever talking of virtue there ! But I have noticed one thing ; houses where they are forever talking of virtue are like rich chambers where they have been burning pastilles, one can feel pretty sure that there is something to be hidden ! Such a strong perfume of virtue is suspicious. It was they, those Sipiagins, who destroyed poor Neshdanof.”

“What is become of Solomine ?” asked Mashurina.

She felt a sudden dislike to hear Neshdanof spoken of by this man.

“Solomine ? There’s a smart fellow for you ! He steered his boat well. He left his old factory and took the best workmen with him. There was one of them—a clever creature they say—his name is Paul. Solomine took him too. Now they say he has a factory of his own, not a very large one, somewhere in the government of Perm, and he has established it on the co-operative principle. You may be sure he won’t make a mess of his business. He’ll make a good thing of it. He’s sharp and he’s strong, too ; he is a great fellow. And above all he does not pretend to right all social wrongs in a moment. The rest of us Russians, you know what we are like ; we are always hoping that something or some one will come to cure all our troubles in a moment, to heal our wounds, to take away all

our sufferings as one pulls out a bad tooth. Who or what is to perform this miracle? Will Darwinism do it? Will the commune? or Arkhip Perepeutief? Or a foreign war? No matter; only let the benefactor come and pull out our tooth for us! In reality all of this means: idleness, want of energy and of reflection! But Solomine is not of this stamp; he does not extract teeth; he is a clever fellow!"

Mashurina made a gesture which seemed to say "*Requiescat in pace.*"

"And that young girl," asked she, "I have forgotten her name, who went off with him, with Neshdanof?"

"Marianne? She married that very Solomine—more than a year ago. At first it was a merely formal marriage, but now I understand they live together as man and wife. Yes!"

Mashurina made the same gesture she had made à propos of Solomine.

Formerly she had felt jealousy of Marianne because she loved Neshdanof; now she was indignant that she had been false to his memory.

"There is a child, I suppose," she said disdainfully.

"Perhaps, I don't know. But where are you going, where are you going?" added Pakline on seeing her take her hat. "Wait, Snandoulia will have the tea ready in a moment."

What Pakline desired was not so much to keep Mashurina as to pour out to some one all that had been heavily fermenting in his mind. Since his return to Petersburg he saw very few people, above all, few young people. His experience with Neshdanof had alarmed him, he had become very prudent, he fled society, and the young people on their side regarded him with a suspicious eye. One of them had even called him informer to his face. As to old people, he took little pleasure in their society, so whole weeks sometimes passed without his having occasion to speak a word.

He did not let himself out much with his sister, not that he believed her incapable of understanding him; quite the contrary! He esteemed her intelligence most highly. But with her he was obliged to speak seriously, and with per-

fect veracity ; and whenever he indulged himself in “ playing trumps ” as they say with us, she would begin to look at him in a peculiarly attentive, almost compassionate way, which made him feel ashamed of himself. But grant that one can’t always keep from playing trumps, even if only a deuce of trumps.

All which made life at Petersburg very disheartening to Pakline, and he sometimes thought of carrying his Penates elsewhere—to Moscow, perhaps.

And meanwhile, a crowd of considerations, of reflections, of thoughts, of droll and piquant sayings heaped up and collected within him, as the waters of a mill when the dam was closed. The gate could not be raised, and the water became stagnant and corrupted. Then Mashurina came, the floodgate was raised, and the flow of words poured forth. He had something to say about every one and everything—about Petersburg, and life there, about all Russia. Nothing nor nobody was spared. All this interested Mashurina very little ; but she did not answer him nor interrupt him, which was all he asked.

“ Yes,” he said, “ we have come to a pretty pass I assure you ! In society complete stagnation ; everybody is horribly bored ! In literature an absolute nothingness ! *tabula rasa* ! In criticism, if a young progressist writer wishes to say that ‘ hens have a faculty for laying eggs,’ he must have twenty pages in which to show forth this profound truth, and even then he will not have explained it quite to his satisfaction ! In science, ha ! ha ! ha ! we have the learned Kant still with us ; but only on the engineer’s collars ! * In art it is just the same. Go to the concert this evening, you will hear the popular singer Agrémentaky. . . He is tremendously successful. Well, if a stuffed carp could sing, if, I say, a very fat and very insipid stuffed carp could sing, it would sing precisely as that gentleman does, which does not prevent Skoropikin, you know, our severe critic, from praising him up to the skies ! ‘ It is very dif-

* Kant in Russia means a border or piping, such as the engineers, artillery-men, the scientific class in the army in general, wear upon the collars of their uniforms.

ferent,' he says, 'from Western art !' He also praised up to the skies our wretched daubers. 'Formerly' he says, 'I too raved about Europe and the Italians; but I have heard Rossini, and I said, Eh ! eh ! pugh !—I have seen Raphael, and I said, Eh ! eh ! pugh ! and all our young men ask nothing better and say, 'Eh ! eh ! pugh ! 'like Skoropikim, and they are delighted, if you'll believe it. And meanwhile the people are suffering terribly, the taxes have ruined them, and the only reform that has been introduced is that the peasant men wear caps now, and the women have given up their old style of head-dress—and starvation, and drunkenness, and the monopolists—"

But at that moment Mashurina yawned, and Pakline saw he must change the subject.

"You haven't yet told me where you've spent these last two years, nor whether you've been back long, nor what you've been doing, nor how you got transformed into an Italian countess, nor why—"

"There's no need of your knowing all that," interrupted Mashurina; "what is the use? it don't concern you any longer."

That cut Pakline; but to hide his mortification he laughed a little forced laugh.

"As you please," said he, "I know that in the eyes of the younger generation I'm behind the times. The fact is I can't consider myself any longer as one of the—"

He did not finish his sentence.

"Here's Snandoulia with the tea. You will take a cup, and meanwhile listen to me. Perhaps I may tell you something of interest."

Mashurina took the cup in one hand and a lump of sugar in the other, and began to drink her tea in the Russian fashion, nibbling at her sugar.

Whereat Pakline laughed heartily.

"It is very lucky that the police are not here for the Italian countess—what was the name?"

"Rocco di Santo-Fiume!" replied Mashurina, swallowing a mouthful of boiling tea.

"Rocco di Santo-Fiume!" repeated Pakline, "and she takes her tea in real Russian fashion! That is not likely!

That alone would be enough to awaken the gravest suspicions."

"That was just what happened at the frontier," said Mashurina; "there was a man in uniform who would not let me alone; he asked me a lot of questions. At last I lost patience: 'Will you let me alone!' I said to him."

"In Italian?"

"Not at all; in Russian."

"And what did he do?"

"What did he do? He went off, of course."

"Bravo!" cried Pakline. "Oh! what a countess! Take another little cup of tea. There is one remark I wish to make to you. Just now you were rather hard upon Solomine. Well, do you know what I think? People like him are the real people. One does not understand them at first; but, believe me, they are the real people, and the future belongs to them."

"They are not heroes, not even those 'heroes of toil,' about whom some absurd American or Englishman, I don't recollect which, has written a book for the edification of the rest of us poor devils; these are the solid men who come from the people, and are colorless, somber, dull-looking. We need them now, and them only."

"Look at Salomine, for instance; his spirit is as clear as the day, and he stands straight and sturdy as an oak! That's a most exceptional thing! What is the general rule in Russia at the present day? If you are an intelligent, living, thinking, being, you are infallibly sick! Whilst Solomine has certainly the same thoughts and troubles as we have; and detests what we detest, his nerves, nevertheless, are sound, and his body obeys him as it ought. Yes, he is a fine fellow!"

"Say what you please, but a man who has an ideal, and who does not waste words, who is well educated and springs from the people; who is simple and at the same time very skillful. . . what better would you have?"

"And don't tell me," continued Pakline, who let himself go more and more, without perceiving that Mashurina had long ceased listening to him, and that she had again begun to look askance at him; "don't tell me that there are among

us at this moment all sorts of individuals ; and of slavophiles, and of bureaucrats, and of generals, single and double,* like violets, and of epicureans, by the way, and of imitators and of crazy heads ! I know a lady named Febronie Ristdroff, who one fine day became a point-blank legitimist, and assured every one that when she died, if they opened her heart, they would find inscribed there the name of Henry V.—on Febronie Ristdroff's heart !

“Don't tell me all this, my worthy friend ; but believe that our only true path is that followed by simple commonplace and clever people, by Solomines in a word ! Remember at what a moment I say this to you—during the winter of 1870, at the moment when Germany is making ready to crush France, at the moment when—”

“Sila,” said suddenly behind him Snandoulia's voice, “it seems to me that in your prophecies for the future you forget our religion and its influence. Besides,” added she quickly, “Miss Mashurina is not listening to you—you'd better offer her a cup of tea.”

“Ah ! yes,” said Pakline, cut short, “yes, indeed won't you have—”

But Mashurina, slowly raising to his her somber eyes, said with a thoughtful air :

“I wanted to ask you, Pakline, if you did not have anywhere some of Neshdanof's writing or his photograph ?”

“I have his photograph—yes, and not a bad one I think. It is in the table drawer. I will find it for you in a moment.”

He began to rummage in the drawer. Snandoulia approached Mashurina, looked at her steadily for some time, and pressed her hand in a very friendly way.

“Here it is, I have found it !” cried Pakline, handing the photograph to Mashurina.

Then without looking at the portrait, without thanking him, but blushing violently, she thrust the card quickly into her pocket, put on her hat and went toward the door.

“You are going ?” said Pakline ; “at any rate give me your address !”

* Referring to the decoration of one or two stars, according to their rank.

"I have no fixed address."

"I understand ; you don't want me to know it. Tell me at least one thing : You are still under the orders of Vassili Nicholaïvitch ?"

"What is that to you ?"

"Or of some one else, perhaps ? of Lidor Sidorovitch !"

Mashurina did not answer.

"Or perhaps of some anonymous person ?"

Mashurina crossed the threshold.

"Yes, perhaps of some anonymous person."

She closed the door behind her.

Pakline remained for some time motionless before the closed door.

"Anonymous Russia !" he said at last.

THE END.

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